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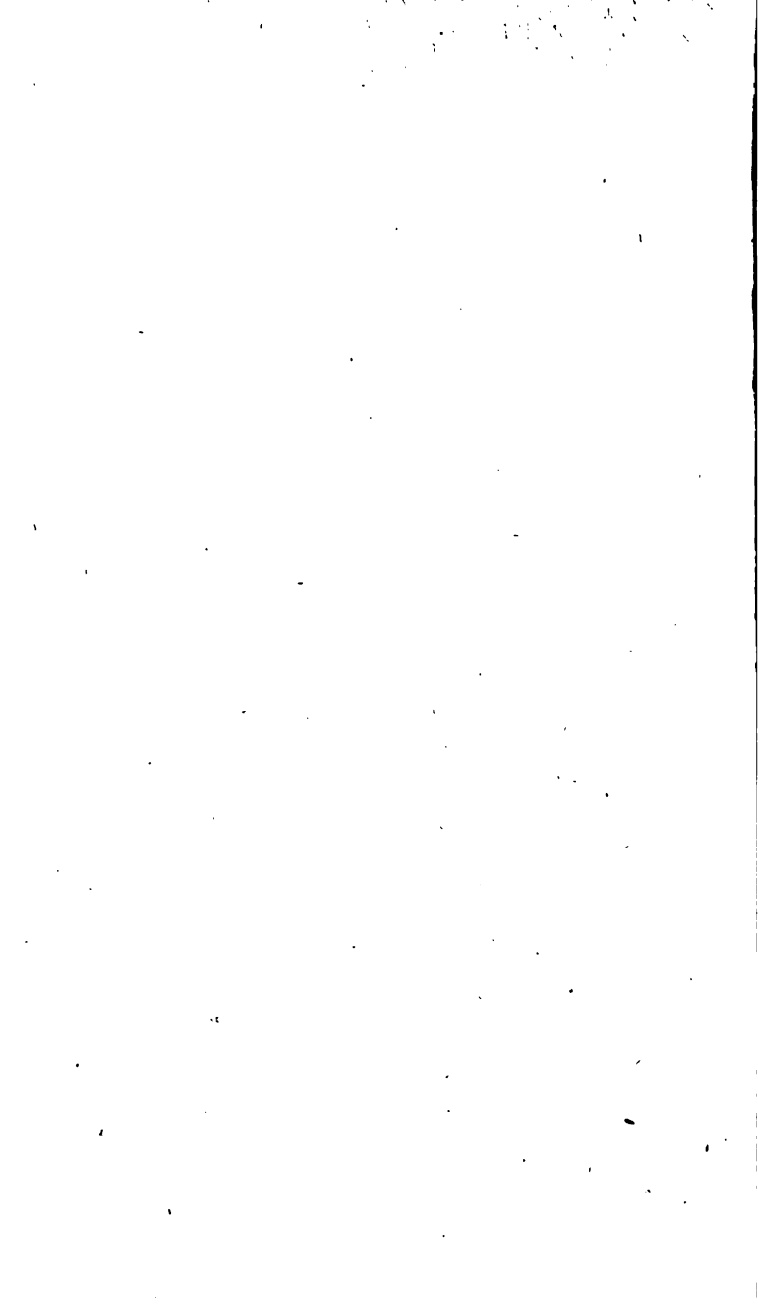
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FABULOUS HISTORIES,

DESIGNED FOR THE

INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN,

RESPECTING

THEIR TREATMENT OF ANIMALS.

BY MRS. TRIMMER.

TWELFTH EDITION.

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1826.



TO
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS,
PRINCESS SOPHIA.

MADAM,

I FEEL inexpressible satisfaction in being allowed to present to a PRINCESS of your distinguished humanity, and sweetness of disposition, this little Work : not merely on account of the honour it reflects on myself (of which I am very sensible) but from the persuasion that your Patronage will give weight to the Lessons I now attempt to teach, and your Example enforce the practice of them.

I do not mean to flatter you, Madam, nor would I on any account suggest to your mind an idea unsuitable to your tender years ; therefore give me leave to add, that you must consider yourself as indebted for this good disposition, in the first place to DIVINE PROVIDENCE, and in the next to the excellent education which it is your happiness to receive.

If you continue to avail yourself of these advantages you will be a blessing to your ROYAL PARENTS, and an ornament to your country ; and, from your elevated station, will be enabled to do much good in the world, by exciting the emulation of others, of inferior ranks, to imitate your virtues.

That these virtues may increase with your growing years, and that the anniversary of THIS DAY may, to the end of life, afford you a comfortable retrospect on the time that has passed, is the fervent wish of,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highness's

Most obliged, and

Most obedient Servant,

SARAH TRIMMER.

November 3, 1785.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It certainly comes within the compass of *Christian benevolence* to shew compassion to the *Animal Creation*; and a good mind naturally inclines to do so. But as, through an erroneous education, or bad example, many children contract habits of *tormenting* inferior creatures, before they are conscious of giving them pain; or fall into the contrary fault of *immoderate tenderness* to them; it is hoped that an attempt to point out the line of conduct, which ought to regulate the actions of *human* beings towards those over whom the SUPREME GOVERNOR has given them dominion, will not be thought a useless undertaking; and that the mode of conveying instruction on this subject, which the Author of the following sheets has adopted, will engage the attention of young minds, and prove instrumental to the happiness of many an innocent animal.

INTRODUCTION.

MANY young readers, doubtless, remember to have met with a book which gives an account of a little boy named Henry, and his sister Charlotte*, whose mamma, when she indulged them with walking in the fields and gardens, taught them to take particular notice of every object that presented itself to their view. The consequence of this was, that they contracted a great fondness for animals; and used often to express a wish that their birds, cats, dogs, &c. could *talk*, that they might hold conversations with them. Their mamma, therefore, to amuse them, composed the following Fabulous Histories; in which the sentiments and affections of a good father and mother, and a family of children, are *supposed* to be possessed by a *nest of Redbreasts*; and others of the feathered race are, by the force of imagination, endued with the same faculties: but before Henry and Charlotte began to read these Histories, they were taught to consider them, not as containing the real conversations of birds, (for that is impossible we should ever understand), but as a series of *FABLES*, intended to convey moral instruction applicable to themselves, at the same time that they excite compassion and tenderness for those interesting and delightful creatures, on which such wanton cruelties are frequently inflicted, and recommend *universal benevolence*.

Having given this account of the origin of the following little work, the Author will no longer detain her young readers from the perusal of it, as she flatters herself they will find ample instruction respecting the proper treatment of animals, in the course of her Fabulous Histories, which now invite their attention.

* See the Author's Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature.

FABULOUS HISTORIES.

CHAPTER I.

IN a hole which time had made in a wall covered with ivy, a pair of REDBREASTS built their nest. No place could have been better chosen for the purpose ; it was sheltered from the rain, screened from the wind, and in an orchard belonging to a gentleman who had strictly charged his domestics not to destroy the labours of those little songsters who chose his ground as an asylum.

In this happy retreat, which no idle schoolboy dared to enter, the hen Redbreast laid four eggs, and then took her seat upon them ; resolving that nothing should tempt her to leave the nest for any length of time till she had hatched her infant brood. Her tender mate every morning took her place while she picked up a hasty breakfast, and often, before he tasted any food himself, cheered her with a song.

At length the day arrived when the happy mother heard the chirping of her little ones ; pleasing to her ears as the prattle of a beloved child to its fond parent : with inexpressible tenderness she spread her maternal wings to cover them, threw out the eggshells in which they before lay confined, then pressed them to her bosom, and presented them to her mate, who viewed them with rapture, and seated himself by her side, that he might share her pleasure.

We may promise ourselves much delight in rearing our little family, said he, but it will occasion us a great deal of trouble ; I would willingly bear the

whole fatigue myself, but it will be impossible for me, with my utmost labour and industry, to supply all our nestlings with what is sufficient for their daily support; it will therefore be necessary for you to leave the nest occasionally, in order sometimes to seek provisions for them. She declared her readiness to take a flight whenever it should be requisite; and said that there would be no necessity for her to be long absent, as she had in her last excursion discovered a place near the orchard, where food was scattered on purpose for such birds as would take the pains of seeking it: and that she had been informed by a chaffinch that there was no kind of danger in picking it up. This is a lucky discovery indeed, replied he, and we must avail ourselves of it; for this great increase of family renders it prudent to make use of every expedient for supplying our necessities; I myself must take a large circuit, for some insects that are proper for the nestlings cannot be found in all places; however, I will bear you company whenever it is in my power. The little ones now began to feel the sensations of hunger, and opened their gaping mouths for food; on which their kind father instantly flew forth to find it for them, and in turns supplied them all, as well as his beloved mate. This was a hard day's work; and when evening came on he was glad to seek repose; and turning his head under his wing he soon fell asleep; his mate followed his example; the four little ones had before fallen into a gentle slumber; and perfect quietness for some hours reigned in the nest.

The next morning they were awakened at the dawn of day, by the song of a skylark, who had a nest near the orchard; and, as the young Red-

breasts were impatient for food, their father cheerfully prepared himself to renew his toil, but first requested his mate to accompany him to the place she had mentioned. That I will do, replied she, at a proper hour, but it is too early yet: I must, therefore, entreat that you will go by yourself and procure a breakfast for us, as I am fearful of leaving the nestlings before the air is warmer, lest they should be chilled. To this he readily consented, and fed all his little darlings, to whom, for the sake of distinction, I shall give the names of Robin, Dicky, Flapsy, and Pecksy. When this kind office was performed, he perched on an adjacent tree, and there, while he rested, entertained his family with his melody, till his mate, springing from the nest, called on him to attend her; on which he instantly took wing, and followed her to a court-yard belonging to a family mansion.

No sooner did they appear before the parlour window, than it was hastily thrown up by Miss Harriet Benson, a little girl about eleven years old, the daughter of the gentleman and lady to whom the house belonged.

Miss Harriet, with great delight, called her brother to see the two Robin Redbreasts: her summons was instantly complied with, and she was joined by Master Frederick, a fine chubby rosy cheeked boy about six years of age, who, as soon as he had taken a peep at the feathered strangers, ran to his mamma, and entreated her to give him something to feed the birds with. I must have a great piece of bread this morning, said he, for there are all the sparrows and chaffinches that come every day, and two Robin Redbreasts besides.—Here is a piece for

you, Frederick, replied Mrs. Benson, cutting a roll that was on the table ; but if your daily pensioners continue to increase, as they have done lately, we must provide some other food for them, as it is not right to cut pieces from a loaf on purpose for birds, because there are many children who want bread, to whom we should give the preference. Would you deprive a poor little hungry boy of his breakfast, to give it to birds? No, said Frederick, I would sooner give my own breakfast to a poor boy than he should go without: but where shall I get victuals enough for my birds? I will beg the cook to save the crumbs in the bread-pan, and desire John to preserve all he makes when he cuts the loaf for dinner, and those which are scattered on the tablecloth. A very good scheme, said Mrs. Benson, and I advise you, my dear, to put it in execution; for I make no doubt it will answer your purpose, if you can prevail on the servants to indulge you. I cannot bear to see the least fragment of food wasted, which may conduce to the support of life in any creature.

Miss Harriet being quite impatient to exercise her benevolence, requested her brother to remember that the poor birds, for whom he had been a successful solicitor, would soon fly away if he did not make haste to feed them; on which he ran to the window with his treasure in his hand.

When Miss Harriet first appeared, the winged suppliants approached with eager expectation of the daily handful, which their kind benefactress made it a custom to distribute, and were surprised at the delay of her charity. They hopped around the window—they chirped—they twittered, and em-

ployed all their little arts to gain attention; and were on the point of departing, when Master Frederick, breaking a bit from the piece he held in his hand, attempted to scatter it among them, calling out at the same time, Dicky! Dicky! On hearing the well-known sound of invitation, the little flock immediately drew near. Master Frederick held a short contest with his sister, in order to prevail with her to let him feed all the birds himself; but finding that he could not fling the crumbs far enough for the Redbreasts, who with the timidity of strangers kept at a distance, he resigned the task, and Miss Harriet, with dexterous hand, threw some of them to the very spot where the affectionate pair stood, waiting for an opportunity of attracting her notice, and with grateful hearts picked up the portion assigned them; and in the meanwhile the other birds having satisfied their hunger, successively withdrew, and they were left alone. Master Frederick exclaimed with rapture, that the two Robin Redbreasts were feeding! and Miss Harriet meditated a design of taming them, by repeated instances of kindness. Be sure, my dear brother, said she, not to forget to ask the cook and John for the crumbs, and do not let the least little morsel of any thing you have to eat fall to the ground. I will be careful in respect to mine, and we will collect all that papa and mamma crumble; and if we cannot by these means get enough, I will spend some of my money in grain for them. Oh! said Frederick, I would spend all the money I have in the world to buy victuals for my dear, dear birds.—Hold, my love, said Mrs. Benson, though I commend your humanity, I must remind you again that there are

poor people as well as poor birds.—Well, mamma, replied Frederick, I will only buy a little grain then. As he spake the last words, the Redbreasts having finished their meal, the mother bird expressed her impatience to return to the nest; and having obtained her mate's consent, repaired with all possible speed to her humble habitation, whilst he tuned his melodious pipe, and delighted their young benefactors with his music; he then spread his wings, and took his flight to an adjoining garden, where he had a great chance of finding worms for his family.

CHAPTER II.

MASTER BENSON expressed great concern that the Robins were gone; but was comforted by his sister, who reminded him that, in all probability, his new favourites, having met with so kind a reception, would return on the morrow. Mrs. Benson then bade them shut the window; and, taking Frederick in her lap, and desiring Miss Harriet to sit down by her, thus addressed them:

I am delighted, my dear children, with your humane behaviour towards the animal creation, and wish by all means to encourage it: but though a most commendable propensity, it requires regulation; let me therefore recommend to you, not to suffer it to gain upon you to such a degree as to make you unhappy, or forgetful of those who have a superior claim to your attention:—I mean poor people—always keep in mind the distresses which they endure; and on no account waste any kind of food, nor give to inferior animals what is designed for mankind.

Miss Harriet promised to follow her mamma's in-

structions; but Frederick's attention was entirely engaged by watching a butterfly, which had just left the chrysalis, and was fluttering in the window, longing to try its wings in the air and sunshine; this Frederick was very desirous of catching, but his mamma would not permit him to attempt it; because (she told him) he could not well lay hold of its wings without doing it an injury, and it would be much happier at liberty. Should you like, Frederick, said she, when you are going out to play, to have any body lay hold of you violently, scratch you all over, then offer you something to eat which is very disagreeable, and perhaps poisonous, and shut you up in a little dark room! And yet this is the fate to which many an harmless insect is condemned by thoughtless children. As soon as Frederick understood that he could not catch the butterfly without hurting it, he gave up the point, and assured his mamma he did not want to keep it, but only to carry it out of doors. Well, replied she, that end may be answered by opening the window; which at her desire was done by Miss Harriet: the happy insect seized the opportunity of escaping, and Frederick had soon the pleasure of seeing it upon a rose.

Breakfast being ended, Mrs. Benson reminded the young lady and gentleman that it was almost time for their lessons to begin; but desired their maid to take them into the garden before they applied to business, while she gave some directions in the family: and Master Frederick, during his walk, amused himself with watching the butterfly, as it flew from flower to flower, which gave him more pleasure than he could possibly have received from catching and confining the little tender creature.

Let us now see what became of our Redbreasts after they left their young benefactors.

The hen bird, as I informed you, repaired immediately to the nest; her heart fluttered with apprehension, as she entered it, and she eagerly called out, Are you all safe, my little dears!—All safe, my good mother, replied Pecksy, but a little hungry, and very cold.—Well, said she, your last complaint I can soon remove; but in respect to the satisfying your hunger, that must be your father's task, for I have not been able to bring any thing good for you to eat; however, he will soon be here, I make no doubt. Then spreading her wings over them all, she soon communicated warmth to them, and they were again comfortable.

In a very short time her mate returned; for he only stayed at Mr. Benson's to finish his song, and refresh himself with some clear water, which his new friends always kept in the place where they fed the birds, on purpose for their little pensioners. He brought in his mouth a worm, which was given to Robin; and was going to fetch one for Dicky, but that his mate reminded him of their agreement, to divide betwixt them the care of providing for the family. My young ones are now hatched, said she, and you can keep them warm as well as myself; take my place, therefore, and the next excursion shall be mine.—I consent, answered he, with the more pleasure, because I think a little flying now and then will do you good; but to save you the trouble of a painful search, I can direct you to a spot where you may be certain of finding worms enow for this morning's supply. He then described the place; and immediately on her quitting the nest entered it, and ga-

thered his young ones under his wings.—Come, my dears, said he, let us see what kind of a nurse I can make; but an awkward one, I fear; even every mother-bird is not a good nurse; but you are very fortunate in yours, for she is an exceedingly tender one, and I hope you will make her a dutiful return for her kindness. They all promised him they would. Well then, said he, I will sing you a song. He did so, and it was a very merry one, and delighted the nestlings extremely; so that, though they laid a little inconveniently under his wings, they did not regard it, nor think the time of their mother's absence long. She had not succeeded in the place she first went to, as a boy was picking up worms to angle with, of whom she was afraid, and therefore flew farther: but as soon as she had obtained what she went for, she returned with all possible speed; and, notwithstanding she had repeated invitations from several gay birds which she met to join their sportive parties, she kept a steady course, preferring the pleasure of feeding little Dicky, to all the diversions of the fields and groves. As soon as the hen came near the nest, her mate started up to make room for her, and take his turn of providing for his family. Once more adieu! said he, and was out of sight in an instant.

My dear nestlings, said the mother, how do you do?—Very well, thank you, replied all at once; and we have been exceedingly merry, said Robin, for my father has sung us a sweet song. I think, said Dicky, I should like to learn it.—Well, replied the mother, he will teach it you, I dare say; here he comes, ask him.—I am ashamed, said Dicky. Then you are a silly bird; never be ashamed but when you

commit a fault: asking your father to teach you to sing is not one; and good parents delight to teach their young ones every thing that is proper and useful. Whatever so good a father sets you an example of, you may safely desire to imitate. Then, addressing herself to her mate, who for an instant stopped at the entrance of the nest, that he might not interrupt her instructions, Am I not right, said she, in what I have just told them? Perfectly so, replied he; I shall have pleasure in teaching them all that is in my power; but we must talk of that another time. Who is to feed poor Pecksy? Oh, I, I, answered the mother, and was gone in an instant.—And so you want to learn to sing, Dicky? said the father: well, then, I will repeat my song, so pray listen very attentively; you may learn the notes, though you will not be able to practise them till your voice is stronger. He then sung with the same approbation as before.

Robin now remarked that it was very pretty indeed, and expressed his desire to learn it also.—By all means, said his father, I shall sing it very often, so you may learn it if you please. For my part, said Flapsy, I do not think I could have patience to learn it, it will take so much time.—Nothing, my dear Flapsy, answered the father, can be acquired without patience, and I am sorry to find yours begin to fail you already: but I hope, if you have no taste for music, that you will give the greater application to things that may be of more importance to you. Well, said Pecksy, I would apply to music with all my heart, but I do not believe it possible for me to attain it. Perhaps not, replied her father; but I do not doubt your application to whatever your mother

requires of you ; and she is an excellent judge both of your talents and of what is suitable to your station in life. She is no songstress herself, and yet she is very clever, I assure you : here she comes. Then rising to make room for her, Take your seat, my love, said he, and I will perch upon the ivy. The hen again covered her brood, whilst her mate amused her with his singing and conversation, till evening reminded them of repose ; excepting that each made alternate excursions as the appetites of their young ones required.

In this manner several days passed with little variation ; the nestlings were very thriving, and daily gained strength and knowledge, through the care and attention of their indulgent parents, who every day visited their friends, Master and Miss Benson. Frederick had been successful in his application to both the cook and footman, by whose assistance he obtained enough for his dear birds, as he called them, without infringing on the rights of the poor ; as he was still able to produce a penny whenever his papa or mamma pointed out to him a proper object of charity.

CHAPTER III.

It happened one day that both the Redbreasts, who always went together to Mr. Benson's, (because if one had waited for the other's return, it would have missed the chance of being fed) ; it happened, I say, that they were both absent longer than usual ; for their little benefactors having been fatigued with a very long walk the evening before, lay late in bed that morning ; but as soon as Frederick was dressed, his sister, who was waiting for him, took him by the

hand, and led him down stairs, where he hastily demanded of the cook the collection of crumbs reserved for him. As soon as he entered the breakfast parlour, he ran eagerly to the window, and attempted to fling it up. What is the cause of this mighty bustle? said his mamma. Do you not perceive that I am in the room, Frederick?—O, my birds! my birds! cried he. I understand, rejoined Mrs. Benson, that you have neglected to feed your little pensioners; how came this about, Harriet?—We were so tired last night, answered Miss Benson, that we overslept ourselves, mamma.—This excuse may satisfy you and your brother, added the lady, but I fear your birds would bring heavy complaints against you, were they able to talk our language. But make haste to supply their present wants: and, for the future, whenever you give any living creature cause to depend on you for sustenance, be careful on no account to disappoint it; and if you are prevented feeding it yourself, employ another person to do it for you. But though it is very commendable, and indeed an obligation on your humanity, to be attentive to your dependants, yet you must not let this make you forgetful of your duty to your friends. It is customary for boys and girls to pay their respects to their papas and mammas every morning, as soon as they see them. This, Frederick, you ought to have done to me, on entering the parlour, instead of running across it, crying out, My birds! my birds! It would have taken you but very little time to have done so: however, I will excuse your neglect now, my dear, as you did not intend to offend me; but I expect that you will so manage the business you have undertaken, that it may not break in on your higher obli-

gations. You depend as much on your papa and me for every thing you want as these little birds do on you ; nay, more so, for they could supply their own wants by seeking food in other places ; but children can do nothing towards their support : therefore, it is particularly requisite that they should be dutiful and respectful to those whose tenderness and care are constantly exerted for their benefit.

Miss Harriet promised her mamma that she would, on all occasions, endeavour to behave as she wished her to do : but I am sorry to say Frederick was more intent on opening the window than on imbibing the good instructions that were given him. This he could not effect ; and therefore Harriet, by her mamma's permission, went to his assistance, and the store of provisions was dispensed. As many birds had nests, they eat their meal with all possible expedition ; among this number were the Robins, who dispatched the business as soon as they could, for the hen was anxious to return to her little ones, and the cock to procure them a breakfast ; and having given his young friends a serenade before they left their bed-chambers, he did not think it necessary to stay to sing any more ; they therefore departed.

When the mother bird had arrived at the ivy-wall, she stopped at the entrance of the nest with a palpitating heart ; but seeing her brood all safe and well she hastened to take them under her wings. As soon as she was seated, she observed that they were not so cheerful as usual. What is the matter ? said she ; How have you agreed during my absence ? To these questions all were unwilling to reply ; for the truth was, that they had been quarrelling almost the whole time. What ! all silent ? said she ; I fear you

have not obeyed my commands, but have been contending. I desire you will tell me the truth. Robin, knowing that he was the greatest offender, began to justify himself before the others could have time to lay an accusation against him.

I am sure, mother, said he, I only gave Dick a little peck, because he crowded me so; and all the others joined with him, and fell upon me at once.

Since you have begun, Robin, answered Dicky, I must speak, for you gave me a very hard peck indeed; and I was afraid you had put out my eye. I am sure I made all the room I could for you; but you said you ought to have half the nest, and to be master when your father and mother were out, because you are the eldest.

I do not love to tell tales, said Flapsy, but what Dicky says is very true, Robin; and you plucked two or three little feathers out of me, only because I begged you not to use us ill.

And you set your foot very hard upon me, cried Pecksy, for telling you that you had forgot your dear mother's command.

This is a sad story indeed, said the mother, I am very sorry to find, Robin, that you already discover such a turbulent disposition. If you go on in this manner we shall have no peace in the nest; nor can I leave it with any degree of satisfaction. As for your being the eldest, though it makes me shew you a preference on all proper occasions, it does not give you a privilege to domineer over your brothers and sisters. You are all equally the objects of our tender care, which we shall exercise impartially among you, provided you do not forfeit it by bad behaviour. To shew you that you are not master of the nest, I de-

sire you to get from under my wing, and sit on the outside, while I cherish those who are dutiful and good. Robin, greatly mortified, retired from his mother; on which Dicky, with the utmost kindness, began to intercede for him. Pardon Robin, my dear mother, I entreat you, said he; I heartily forgive his treatment of me, and would not have complained to you, had it not been necessary for my own justification. You are a good bird, Dicky, said his mother; but such an offence as this must be repented of before it is pardoned. At this instant her mate returned with a fine worm, and looked as usual for Robin, who lay skulking by himself. Give it, said the mother, to Dicky; Robin must be served last this morning; nay, I do not know whether I shall permit him to have any victuals all day. Dicky was very unwilling to mortify his brother; but, on his mother's commanding him not to detain his father, he opened his mouth and swallowed the delicious mouthful. What can be the matter, said the good father, when he had emptied his mouth: surely none of the little ones have been naughty? But I cannot stop to inquire at present, for I left another fine worm, which may be gone if I do not make haste back.

As soon as he departed, Dicky renewed his entreaties that Robin might be forgiven; but, as he sat swelling with anger and disdain, because he fancied that the eldest should not be shoved to the outside of his mother's wing, while the others were fed, she would not hear a word in his behalf. The father soon came and fed Flapsy, and then thinking it best for his mate to continue her instructions, he made another excursion; during which Pecksy, whose little heart was full of affectionate concern for the

punishment of her brother, thus attempted to comfort him.

Dear Robin, do not grieve, I will give you my breakfast, if my mother will let me. - Oh, said Robin, I do not want any breakfast; if I may not be served *first* I will have *none*. Shall I ask my mother to forgive you? I do not want any of your intercessions, replied he; if you had not been a parcel of ill-natured things, I should not have been pushed about as I am.

Come back, Pecksy, said the mother, who overheard them, I will not have you converse with so naughty a bird. I forbid every one of you even to go near him. The father then arrived, and Pecksy was fed. You may rest yourself, my dear, said the mother, your morning's task is ended. Why, what has Robin done? asked he. What I am sorry to relate, she replied; quarrelled with his brother and sisters. Quarrelled with his brother and sisters! you surprise me: I could not have suspected he would have been either so foolish or so unkind. O, this is not all, said the mother, for he presumes on being the eldest, and claims half the nest to himself when we are absent, and now is sullen because he is disgraced and not fed first as usual. If this is the case, replied the father, leave me to settle this business, my dear, and pray go into the air a little, for you seem to be sadly vexed. I am disturbed, said she, I confess; for, after all my care and kindness, I did not expect such a sad recompense as this. I am sorry to expose this perverse bird even to you, but he will not be corrected by me. I will do as you desire, go into the air a little; so saying she repaired to a neighbouring tree, where she waited, with anxious expectation, the event of her mate's admonition.

As soon as the mother departed, the father thus addressed the delinquent. And so, Robin, you want to be master of the nest? A pretty master you will make indeed, who do not know even how to govern your own temper! I will not stand to talk much to you now, because in your present disposition you would in all probability turn a deaf ear to my admonitions; but depend upon it I will not suffer you to use any of the family ill, particularly your good mother; and if you persist in obstinacy, I will certainly turn you out of the nest before you can fly. These threatenings intimidated Robin, and he also began to be very hungry as well as cold; he therefore promised to behave better for the future, and his brothers and sisters pleaded earnestly that he might be forgiven and restored to his usual place.

I can say nothing in respect to the last particular, replied the father, that depends upon his mother; but as it is his first offence, and he seems to be very sorry, I will myself pardon it, and intercede for him with his mother, who I fear is at this time lamenting his obduracy. On this he left the nest to seek for her. Return, my dear, said he, to your beloved family; Robin seems sensible of his offence, and longs to ask your forgiveness. Pleased at this intelligence, the mother raised her drooping head, and closed her wings, which hung mournfully by her sides, expressive of the dejection of her spirits. I fly to give it him, said she, and hastened into the nest. In the meanwhile Robin wished for, yet dreaded her return.

As soon as he saw her he lifted up a supplicating eye, and with feeble accents, (for hunger and sorrow had made him faint) he cried, Forgive me, dear mother, I will not again offend you. I accept your sub-

mission, Robin, said she, and will once more receive you to my wing; but indeed your behaviour has made me very unhappy. She then made room for him, he nestled closely to her side, and soon found the benefit of her fostering him; but the pain of hunger still remained, yet he had not confidence to ask his father to fetch him any victuals: but this kind parent waited not for solicitation; for seeing that his mother had received him into favour, he went with all speed to an adjacent field, where he soon met with refreshment for him, which with tender love he presented, and Robin swallowed with gratitude. Thus was peace restored to the nest, and the happy mother once more rejoiced that harmony reigned in the family.

CHAPTER IV.

A FEW days after, a fresh disturbance took place. All the little Redbreasts, excepting Pecksy, in turn committed some fault or other, for which they were occasionally punished; but she was of so amiable a disposition, that it was her constant study to act with propriety, and avoid giving offence; on which account she was justly caressed by her parents with distinguished kindness. This excited the envy of the others, and they joined together to treat her ill, giving her the title of the *Favourite*; saying that they made no doubt their father and mother would reserve the *nicest morsels* for their *darling*.

Poor Pecksy bore all their reproaches with patience, hoping that she should in time regain their good opinion by her gentleness and affection. But it happened one day that, in the midst of their tauntings, their mother unexpectedly returned, who hearing an uncommon noise among her young ones,

stopped on the ivy to learn the cause; and as soon as she discovered it, made her appearance at the entrance of the nest, with a countenance that indicated her knowledge of their proceedings, and her displeasure at them.

Are these the sentiments, said she, that subsist in a family which ought to be bound together by love and kindness? Which of you has cause to reproach either your father or me with partiality? Do we not, with the exactest equality, distribute the fruits of our labours among you? And in what respect has poor Pecksy the preference but in that commendation which is justly her due, and which you do not strive to deserve? Has she ever yet uttered a complaint against you, though, from the dejection of her countenance, which she in vain attempted to conceal, it is evident that she has suffered your reproaches for some days past? I positively command you to treat her otherwise, for it is a mother's duty to succour a persecuted nestling: and I will certainly admit her next my heart, and banish you all from that place you have hitherto possessed in it, if you suffer envy and jealousy to occupy your bosoms, to the exclusion of that tender love, which she, as the kindest of sisters, has a right to expect from you.

Robin, Dicky, and Flapsy, were quite confounded by their mother's reproof, and Pecksy felt an affectionate concern that they had incurred the displeasure of so tender a parent; and, far from increasing it by complaining of them, endeavoured to soften her anger. That I have been vexed, my dear mother, said she, is true, but not to so great a degree as you suppose; and I am ready to believe that my dear brothers and sister were not in earnest in the severe

things they said of me—perhaps they only meant to try my affection. To spare them the trouble of any future trial, I now entreat them to believe my assurances, that I would willingly resign the greatest pleasure in life, could I by that means increase their happiness; and so far from wishing for the *nicest morsel*, would content myself with the humblest fare, rather than any of them should be disappointed. This tender speech had its desired effect; it recalled those sentiments of love which envy and jealousy had for a time banished: each nestling acknowledged its fault, and having obtained the forgiveness of their mother, a perfect reconciliation took place, to the great joy of Pecksy, and indeed of all parties.

All the nestlings continued very good for several days, and no occurrence happened worth relating; the little flock were soon covered with feathers, which their mother taught them to dress, telling them that neatness was a very essential thing, being conducive to health, as also to the rendering them agreeable in the eye of the world.

Robin was a very strong, robust bird, not remarkable for his beauty; but there was a great briskness in his manner, which covered many defects; and he was very likely to attract notice. His father judged, from the tone of his chirpings, that he would be a very good songster.

Dicky had a remarkably fine plumage; his breast was of a beautiful red, his body and wings of an elegant mottled brown, and his eyes sparkled like diamonds.

Flapsy was also very pretty, but more distinguished for the elegance of her shape than for the variety and lustre of her feathers.

Pecksy had no outward charms to recommend her to notice ; but these defects were amply supplied by the sweetness of her disposition, which was amiable to the greatest degree. Her temper was constantly serene, she was ever attentive to the happiness of her parents, and would not have grieved them for the world ; and her affection for her brothers and sister was so great, that she constantly preferred their interest to her own, of which we have lately given an instance.

The kind parents attended to them with unremitting affection, and made their daily visit to Master and Miss Benson, who very punctually discharged the benevolent office of feeding them. The Robin Redbreasts, made familiar by repeated favours, approached nearer and nearer to their little friends by degrees, and at length ventured to enter the room and feed upon the breakfast-table. Miss Harriet was delighted at the circumstance, and Frederick was quite transported ; he longed to catch the birds ; but his mamma told him that would be the very means to drive them away. Miss Harriet entreated him not to frighten them on any account ; and he was prevailed on to forbear ; but could not help expressing a wish that he had them in a cage, that he might feed them all day long.

And do you really think, Frederick, said Mrs. Benson, that these little delicate creatures are such gluttons as to desire to be fed all day long ? Could you tempt them to do it, they would soon die ; but they know better, and, as soon as their appetites are satisfied, always leave off eating. Many a little boy may learn a lesson from them. Do not you recollect one of your acquaintance, who, if an apple-pie,

or any thing else that he calls nice, is set before him, will eat till he makes himself sick ? Frederick looked ashamed, being conscious that he was too much inclined to indulge his love of delicacies. Well, said his mamma, I see you understand who I mean, Frederick, so we will say no more on that subject ; only, when you meet with that little gentleman, give my love to him, and tell him I beg he will be as moderate as his Redbreasts.

The cock bird, having finished his breakfast, flew out at the window, followed by his mate ; and as soon as they were out of sight, Mrs. Benson continued her discourse. And would you really confine these sweet creatures in a cage, Frederick, merely to have the pleasure of feeding them ? Should you like to be always shut up in a little room, and think it sufficient if you were supplied with victuals and drink ? Is there no enjoyment in running about, jumping, and going from place to place ? Do you not like to keep company with little boys and girls ? And is there no pleasure in breathing the fresh air ? Though these little animals are inferior to you, there is no doubt but they are capable of enjoyments similar to these ; and it must be a dreadful life for a poor bird to be shut up in a cage, where he cannot so much as make use of his wings ; where he is excluded from his natural companions ; and where he cannot possibly receive that refreshment which the air must afford to him when at liberty to soar to such a height. But this is not all, for many a poor bird is caught, and separated from its family, after it has been at the trouble of building a nest, has perhaps laid its eggs, or even hatched its young ones, which are by this means exposed to inevitable destruction. It is

likely that these very Redbreasts may have young ones, for this is the season of the year for their hatching ; and I rather think they have, from the circumstance of their always coming together. If that is the case, said Miss Harriet, it would be pity indeed to confine them. But why, mamma, if it is wrong to catch birds, did you at one time keep Canary-birds ?

The case is very different in respect to Canary-birds, my dear, said Mrs. Benson ; by keeping them in a cage, I did them a kindness. I considered them as little foreigners who claimed my hospitality. This kind of bird came originally from a warm climate ; they are in their nature very susceptible of cold, and would perish in the open air in our winters ; neither does the food which they feed on grow plentifully in this country ; and as they are always here bred in cages, they do not know how to procure the materials for their nests abroad. And there is another particular which would greatly distress them were they to be turned loose, which is, the ridicule and contempt they would be exposed to from other birds. I remember once to have seen a poor Canary-bird which had been turned loose because it could not sing : and surely no creature could be more miserable. It was starving for want of victuals, famishing with thirst, shivering with cold, and looked terrified to the greatest degree ; while a parcel of sparrows and chaffinches pursued it from place to place, twittering and chirping with every mark of insolence and derision. I could not help fancying the little creature to be like a foreigner just landed from some distant country, followed by a rude rabble of boys,

who were ridiculing him because his dress and language were strange to them.

And what became of the poor little creature, mamma? said Miss Harriet. I was going to tell you, my dear, replied Mrs. Benson; I ordered the servant to bring me a cage, with seed and water in their usual places; this I caused to be hung on a tree, next to that in which the little sufferer in vain endeavoured to hide itself among the leaves from its cruel pursuers. No sooner did the servant retire, than the poor little wretch flew to it. I immediately had the cage brought into the parlour, where I experienced great pleasure in observing what happiness the poor creature enjoyed in her deliverance. I kept it some years; but not choosing to confine her in a *little* cage, had a *large* one bought, and procured a companion for her of her own species. I supplied them with materials for building; and from them proceeded a little colony, which grew so numerous, that you know I gave them to Mr. Bruce to put in his aviary, where you have seen them enjoying themselves. So now I hope I have fully accounted for having kept Canary-birds in a cage. You have indeed, mamma, said Harriet.

I have also, said Mrs. Benson, occasionally kept Larks. In severe winters vast numbers of them come to this country from a colder climate, and many perish.

Quantities of them are killed and sold for the spit; and the bird-catchers usually have a great many to sell; and many an idle boy has some to dispose of. I frequently buy them, as you know, Harriet; but as soon as the fine weather returns I constantly set them at liberty. But come, my dears, prepare

for your morning walk ; and afterwards let me see you in my dressing-room.

I wonder, said Frederick, whether our Redbreasts have got a nest ? I will watch to-morrow which way they fly ; for I should like to see the little ones. And what will you do should you find them out ? said his mamma ; not take the nest I hope. Why, replied Frederick, I should like to bring it home, mamma, and put it in a tree near the house ; and then I would scatter crumbs for the old ones to feed them with.

Your design is a kind one, said Mrs. Benson, but would greatly distress your little favourites. Many birds, through fear, forsake their nests when they are removed ; therefore I desire you to let them alone if you should chance to find them. Miss Harriet then remarked that she thought it very cruel to take birds' nests. Ah ! my dear, said Mrs. Benson, those who commit such barbarous actions are quite insensible to the distresses they occasion. It is very true, that we ought not to indulge so great a degree of pity and tenderness for such animals as for those who are more properly our fellow-creatures ; I mean men, women, and children ; but, as every living creature can feel, we should have a constant regard to those feelings, and strive to give happiness rather than inflict misery. But go, my dear, and take your walk. Mrs. Benson then left them to attend her usual morning employments ; and the young lady and gentleman, attended by their maid, passed an agreeable half hour in the garden.

CHAPTER V.

IN the mean time the hen Redbreast returned to the nest, while her mate took his flight in search of

food for his family. When the mother approached the nest, she was surprised at not hearing as usual the chirping of her young ones; and what was her astonishment at seeing them all crowded together, trembling with apprehension. What is the matter, my nestlings, said she, that I find you in this terror?

Oh, my dear mother! cried Robin, who first ventured to raise up his head, is it you? Pecksy then revived, and entreated her mother to come into the nest, which she did without delay, and the little tremblers crept under her wings, endeavouring to conceal themselves in this happy retreat.

What has terrified you in this manner? said she. Oh! I do not know, replied Dicky, but we have seen such a monster as I never beheld before. A monster, my dear! pray describe it. I cannot, said Dicky, it was too frightful to be described. Frightful, indeed, cried Robin; but I had a full view of it, and will give the best description I can.

We were all sitting peaceably in the nest, and very happy together; Dicky and I were trying to sing, when suddenly we heard a noise against the wall, and presently a great round red face appeared before the nest, with a pair of enormous staring eyes, a very large beak, and below that a very wide mouth with two rows of bones that looked as if they would grind us all to pieces in an instant. About the top of this round face, and down the sides, hung something black, but not like feathers. When the two staring eyes had looked at us for some time, the whole thing disappeared. I cannot at all conceive from your description, Robin, what this thing could be, said the mother, but perhaps it may come again.

Oh! I hope not, cried Flapsy, I shall die with fear if it does. Why so, my love? said her mother;

has it done you any harm? I cannot say it has, replied Flapsy. Well then, you do very wrong, my dear, in giving way to such apprehensions. You must strive to get the better of this fearful disposition: when you go abroad in the world you will see many strange objects; and if you are terrified at every appearance which you cannot account for, you will live a most unhappy life. Endeavour to be good, and then you need not fear any thing. But here comes your father, perhaps he will be able to explain the appearance which has so alarmed you to-day.

As soon as the father had given the worm to Robin, he was preparing to depart for another, but, to his surprise, all the rest of the nestlings begged him to stay, declaring they would rather go without their meal, on condition he would but remain at home and take care of them. Stay at home and take care of you! said he. Why is that more necessary now than usual? The mother then related the strange occurrence that had occasioned this request. Nonsense! said he, a monster! great eyes! large mouth! long beak! I don't understand such stuff. Besides, as it did them no harm, why are they to be in such terror now it is gone? Don't be angry, dear father, said Pecksy, for it was very frightful indeed. Well, said he, I will fly round the orchard, and perhaps may meet this monster. Oh, it will eat you up! it will eat you up! said Flapsy. Never fear, said he, and away he flew.

The mother then again attempted to calm them, but all in vain, their fears were now redoubled by apprehensions for their father's safety; however to their great joy he soon returned. Well, said he, I

have seen this monster : the little ones then clung to their mother, fearing the dreadful creature was just at hand. What, afraid again? cried he; a parcel of stout hearts I have in my nest, truly! Why, when you fly about in the world, you will in all probability see hundreds of such monsters (as you call them), unless you choose to confine yourselves to a retired life; nay, even in woods and groves you will be liable to meet some of them, and those of the most mischievous kind. I begin to comprehend, said the mother, that these dear nestlings have seen the face of a man. Even so, replied the mate; it is a man, no other than our friend the gardener, who has so alarmed them.

A MAN! cried Dicky, was that frightful thing a man? Nothing more, I assure you, answered his father, and a good man too, I have reason to believe, for he is very careful not to frighten your mother and me when we are picking up worms, and has frequently thrown crumbs to us when he was eating his breakfast.

And does he live in this garden? said Flapsy. He works here very often, replied her father, but is frequently absent. O then, cried she, pray take us abroad when he is away, for indeed I cannot bear to see him. You are a little simpleton, said the father; and if you do not endeavour to get more resolution, I will leave you in the nest by yourself, when I am teaching your brothers and sister to fly and peck; and what will you do then? for you must not expect we shall go from them to bring you food. Flapsy, fearful that her father should be quite angry, promised to follow his directions in every respect; and the rest, animated by his discourse, began to recover their spirits.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILST these terrible commotions passed in the nest, the *monster*, who was no other than honest Joe the gardener, went to the house, and inquired for his young master and mistress, having, as he justly supposed, a very pleasing piece of intelligence to communicate. Both the young gentleman and lady, who were accustomed to receive little civilities from Joe, very readily attended him, thinking he had got some fruit or flowers for them. Well, Joe, said Miss Benson, what have you to say to us? Have you got a peach or a nectarine? or have you brought me a root of Sweet William?

No, Miss Harriet, said Joe: but I have something to tell you that will please you as much as *tho'* I had. What's that? what's that? said Frederick. Why, Master Frederick, said Joe, a pair of Robins have *com'd* mortal often to one place in the orchard lately; so, *thinks* I, these birds have got a nest. So I *watches* and *watches*, and at last I *see'd* the old hen fly into a hole in the ivy wall. I had a fancy to set my ladder and look in; but, as master ordered me not to frighten the birds, I stayed till the old one flew out again, and then I mounted, and there I *see'd* the little creatures full fledged, and, if you Miss Harriet may go with me, I will shew them to you, for the nest is but a little way from the ground, and you may easily get up the step-ladder.

Frederick was in raptures, being confident that these were the identical Robins he was so attached to, and (like a little thoughtless boy as he was) would have gone immediately with the gardener, had not his sister reminded him that it was proper to ask mam-

ma's leave first ; for which purpose she accompanied him into the parlour.

Good news ! good news ! mamma, cried Frederick ; Joe has found the Robin's nest. Has he, indeed ! said Mrs. Benson. Yes, mamma, said Miss Harriet ; and, if agreeable to you, we should be glad to go along with Joe to see it. And how are you to get at it ? said Mrs. Benson, for I suppose it is some height from the ground ? Oh ! I can climb a ladder very well, cried Frederick. You climb a ladder ! You are a clever gentleman at climbing, I know, replied his mamma ; but do you purpose to mount too, Harriet ? I think this is rather an indelicate scheme for a lady. Joe tells me that the nest is but a very little way from the ground, mamma, answered Harriet, but if I find it otherwise, you may depend on my not going up.—On this condition I will permit you to go—but pray, Mr. Frederick, let me remind you not to frighten your little favourites. Not for all the world, said Frederick : so away he skipped, and got to Joe before his sister. We may go ! we may go ! Joe, cried he. Stay for me, Joe, I beg, said Miss Harriet, who presently joined him.

When the Redbreasts had quieted the fears of their young family, they fed them as usual ; and then, having a little private business, they retired to a tree, desiring their little nestlings not to be terrified if the monster should look in upon them again, as it was very probable he would do. They promised to bear the sight as well as they could.

When the old ones were seated in the tree, It is time, said the father, to take our nestlings abroad. You see, my love, how very timorous they are, and if we do not use them a little to the world, they will

never be able to shift for themselves. Very true, replied the mother, they are now full fledged, and therefore, if you please, we will take them out to morrow: but it will be necessary for me to prepare them for it; I will therefore return to the nest. One of the best preparatives, answered her mate, will be to leave them to themselves a little; therefore we will now take a flight together for a short time, and then go back. The mother complied, but not without reluctance, for she longed to be with her dear family. —Let us now return to the happy party, which we lately left setting off on their visit to the ivy-wall.

CHAPTER VII.

As soon as Joe found that the young *gentry*, as he called them, had obtained permission to accompany him, he took Frederick by the hand, and said, Come along, my young master; but, at Miss Harriet's request, stopped while she fetched her bonnet and tip-pet. Frederick's impatience was so great, that he could scarcely be restrained from running all the way, but that his sister entreated him not to make himself too hot:

At length they arrived at the desired spot: Joe placed the ladder, and his young master, with a little assistance, mounted it very dexterously: but who can describe his raptures when he beheld the nestlings! Oh, the sweet creatures, cried he, there are four of them, I declare! I never saw any thing so pretty in my life! I wish I might carry you all home! That you must not do, Frederick, said his sister; and I beg you will come away, for you will either terrify the little creatures, or alarm the old birds, which perhaps are now waiting somewhere near to

feed them. Well, I will come away directly, said Frederick; and so good bye, Robins! I hope you will come soon along with your father and mother, to be fed in the parlour. He then, under the conduct of his friend Joe, descended.

Joe next addressed Miss Harriet: Now, my young mistress, said he, will you go up? As the steps of the ladder were broad, and the nest was not high, Miss Benson ventured to go up, and was equally delighted with her brother; but so fearful of terrifying the little birds, and alarming the old ones, that she would only indulge herself with a peep at the nest. Frederick inquired how she liked the young Robins? They are sweet creatures, said she, and I hope you will soon find means to invite them to join our party of birds, for they appear to me ready to fly; but let us return to mamma, for you know we promised her to stay but a little while; besides, we hinder Joe from his work. Never mind that, said the honest fellow, master won't be angry, I am *sertain*; and if I thought he would, I would work an hour later to fetch up lost time. Thank you, Joe, replied Miss Harriet, but I am sure papa would not desire that.

At this instant Frederick perceived the two Red-breasts, who were returning from their proposed excursion, and called to his sister to observe them. He was very desirous to watch whether they would go back to their nest, but she would on no account consent to stay, lest her mamma should be displeased, and lest the birds should be frightened: Frederick therefore, with reluctance, followed her, and Joe attended them to the house.

As soon as they were out of sight the hen bird proposed to return to the nest: she had observed

the party, and though she did not see them looking into her habitation, supposed, from their being so near, that they had been taking a view of it, and communicated her suspicions to her mate. He agreed with her that this had probably been the case, and said he now expected to hear a fine story from the nestlings. Let us return, however, said the mother, for perhaps they have been terrified again. Well, said he, I will attend you, then; but let me caution you, my dear, not to indulge their fearful disposition, because such indulgence will certainly prove injurious to them. I will do the best I can, replied she, and then flew to the nest followed by her mate.

She alighted upon the ivy, and peeping into the nest, inquired how they all did. Very well, dear mother, said Robin. What, cried the father, (who now alighted), all safe! Not one eat up by the monster? No, father, replied Dicky, we are not devoured, and yet I assure you, the monster we saw here before has been here again, and brought two others with him. Two others! what, like himself? said the father: I thought, Flapsy, you were to die with apprehension if you saw him again? And so I believe I should have done, had not you, my good father, instructed me to conquer my fears, replied Flapsy. When I saw the top of him, my heart began to flutter to such a degree that I was ready to faint, and every feather of me shook; but when I found he stayed but a very little while, I recovered, and was in hopes he was quite gone. My brothers and sister, I believe, felt as I did; but we comforted one another that the danger was over for this day, and all agreed to make ourselves happy and not fear this monster, since you had assured us he was very harm-

less. However, before we were perfectly come to ourselves, we heard very uncommon noises, sometimes a hoarse sound, disagreeable to our ears as the croaking of a raven, and sometimes a shriller noise, quite unlike the note of any bird that we know of, and immediately after something presented itself to our view which bore a little resemblance to the monster; but by no means so large and frightful. Instead of being all over red, it had on each side two spots of a more beautiful hue than Dicky's breast; the rest of it was of a most delicate white, excepting two streaks of deep red, like the cherry you brought us the other day, and between these two streaks were rows of white bones, but by no means dreadful to behold, like those of the great monster; its eyes were blue and white, and round this agreeable face was something which I cannot describe, very pretty, and as glossy as the feathers of a goldfinch. There was so cheerful and pleasing a look in this creature altogether, that notwithstanding I own I was rather afraid, yet I had pleasure in looking at it; but it stayed a very little time, and then disappeared. While we were puzzling ourselves with conjectures concerning it, another creature, larger than it, appeared before us, equally beautiful, and with an aspect so mild and gentle that we were all charmed with it; but, as if fearful of alarming us by its stay, it immediately retired, and we have been longing for your and my mother's return, in hopes you would be able to tell us what we have seen.

I am happy, my dears, said the mother, to find you more composed than I expected: for as your father and I were flying together, in order to come back to

you, we observed the monster, and the two pretty creatures Pecksy has described; the former is, as your father before informed you, our friend the gardener, and the others are our young benefactors, by whose bounty we are every day regaled; and who, I will venture to say, will do you no harm. You cannot think how kindly they treat us; and though there are a number of other birds who share their goodness, your father and I are favoured with their particular regard.

Oh! said Pecksy, are these sweet creatures your friends! I long to go abroad that I may see them again. Well, cried Flapsy, I perceive that if we judge from appearances we may often be mistaken; who would have thought that such an ugly monster as that gardener could have had a tender heart? Very true, replied the mother; you must make it a rule, Flapsy, to judge of *mankind* by their *actions*, and not by their *looks*. I have known some of them whose appearance was as engaging as that of our young benefactors, who were, notwithstanding, barbarous enough to take eggs out of a nest and spoil them; nay, even carry away nest and all before the young ones were fledged, without knowing how to feed them, or having any regard for the sorrows of the tender parents.—Yes, said the mother, last year it was my misfortune to be deprived of my nestlings in that manner, which occasions my being so timid; the anguish I suffered for their loss is not to be expressed.

A calamity of the same kind befel me, replied the father; I never shall forget it. I had been making an excursion into the woods, in order to procure some delicious morsels for one of my nestlings; when I

returned to the place in which I had imprudently built (for being young and inexperienced, I did not foresee the danger of choosing an exposed situation), the first circumstance that alarmed me, was a part of my nest scattered on the ground just at the entrance of my habitation; I then perceived a large opening in the wall, where before there was only room for myself to pass. I stopped with a palpitating heart, in hopes of hearing the chirpings of my beloved family; but all was silence. I then resolved to enter; but what was my consternation, when I found that the nest, which my dear mate and I had with so much labour built, and the dear little ones, who were the joy of our lives, were stolen away; nay, I did not know but the tender mother also was taken captive. I immediately rushed out of the place, distracted with apprehensions for the miseries they might endure; lamenting my weakness, which rendered me incapable of effecting their rescue; was ready to tear off my own feathers with vexation; but recollecting that my dear mate might in all probability have escaped, I resolved to go in search of her.

As I was flying along, I saw three boys, whose appearance was far from disagreeable; one of them held in his hand my nest of young ones, which he eyed with cruel exultation, while his companions seemed to share his joy.

The dear little creatures, insensible of their fate (for they were newly hatched), opened their mouths in expectation of their usual supply, but all in vain; to have attempted feeding them at this time, would have been inevitable destruction to myself; but I resolved to follow the barbarians, that I might at least see to what place my darlings were consigned.

In a short time the party arrived at a house, and he who before held the nest now committed it to the care of another, but soon returned with a kind of victuals I was totally unacquainted with; and with this my young ones, when they gaped for food, were successively fed; hunger induced them to swallow it with avidity, but soon after, missing the warmth of their mother, they set up a general chirp of lamentation, which pierced my very heart. Immediately after this the nest was carried away, and what became of my nestlings afterwards I never could discover, though I frequently hovered about the fatal spot of their imprisonment with the hope of seeing them.

Pray, father, said Dicky, what became of your mate? Why, my dear, said he, when I found there there was no chance of assisting my little ones, I pursued my course, and sought her in every place of our usual resort, but to no purpose: at length I returned to the bush, where I beheld an afflicting sight indeed, my dear companion lying on the ground, just expiring! I flew to her instantly, and endeavoured to recal her to life. At the sound of my voice she lifted up her languid eyelids, and with feeble accents said, And are you then safe, my love? what is become of our little ones? In hopes of comforting her, I told her they were alive and well; but she replied, Your consolations come too late; the blow is struck, I feel my death approaching. The horror which seized me when I missed my nestlings, and supposed myself robbed at once of my mate and infants, was too powerful for my weak frame to sustain. Oh! why will the human race be so wantonly cruel? The agonies of death now came on, and, after

a few convulsive pangs, she breathed her last, and left me an unhappy widower. I passed the remainder of the summer, and a dreary winter that succeeded it, in a very uncomfortable manner; though the natural cheerfulness of my disposition did not leave me long a prey to unavailing sorrow; and having paid a proper tribute to the memory of my first dear mate, I resolved the following spring to seek another, and had the good fortune to meet with one, whose amiable disposition has renewed my happiness.—And now, my dear, said he, let me ask you what became of your former companion?

Why, replied the hen Redbreast, soon after the loss of our nest, as he was endeavouring to discover what had become of it, a cruel hawk caught him up and devoured him in an instant.

I need not say that I felt the bitterest pangs for his loss; it is sufficient to inform you, that I led a solitary life till I met with you, whose endearing behaviour has made society again agreeable to me.

While the parent birds were thus relating the history of their past misfortunes, the young ones listened with the greatest attention; and when the tales were ended Flapsy exclaimed, Oh! what dangers there are in the world! I shall be afraid to leave the nest. Why so, my love? said the mother; every bird does not meet with hawks and cruel children. You have already, as you sat on the nest, seen thousands of the feathered race, of one kind or other, making their airy excursions, full of mirth and gaiety. This orchard constantly resounds with the melody of those who chant forth their songs of joy; and I believe there are no beings in the world happier than birds, for we are naturally formed for

cheerfulness ; and I flatter myself a prudent precaution will preserve both your father and myself from any future accident. Our parents were young and inexperienced themselves, and could not give us good advice ; but we know the dangers of the world, and I hope shall be able to point out to you such rules of conduct as may, if followed, counteract the usual accidents to which birds are exposed.

Instead of indulging your fears, Flapsy, said the father, summon up all your courage, for to-morrow you shall, with your brothers and sister, begin to see the world. Dicky expressed great delight at this declaration, and Robin boasted that he had not the least remains of fear. Flapsy, though still apprehensive of monsters, yet longed to see the gaieties of life, and Pecksy wished to comply with every desire of her dear parents. The approach of evening now reminded them that it was time to take repose, and turning their heads under their wings, each bird soon resigned itself to the gentle powers of sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER Master and Miss Benson had been gratified with the sight of the Robin's nest, they were returning to the house, conducted by their friend Joe, when they were met in the garden by their papa and mamma, accompanied by Miss Lucy Jenkins and her brother Edward. The former was a fine girl about ten years old, the latter a robust rude boy, turned of eleven. We were coming to seek you, my dear, said Mrs. Benson to her children, for I was fearful that the business you went upon would make you forget your young visitors.

I cannot answer for Frederick, replied Miss Ben-

son ; but indeed, mamma, I would not on any account have slighted my friends.—How do you do, my dear Miss Jenkins ? said she ; I am happy to see you. Will you go with me into the play-room ? I have got some very pretty new books.—Frederick, have you nothing to shew Master Jenkins ? O yes, said Frederick, I have got a new ball, a new top, a new organ, and twenty pretty things, but I had rather go back and shew him the Robins.

The Robins ! said Master Jenkins, what Robins ? Why our Robins that have built in the ivy-wall. You never saw any thing so pretty in your life as the little ones.

Oh, I can see birds enow at home, said Master Jenkins ; but why did you not take the nest ? it would have been nice diversion to you to toss the young birds about. I had a great many nests this year, and do believe I have an hundred eggs.

An hundred eggs ! and how do you propose to hatch them ? said Miss Harriet, who turned back on hearing him talk in this manner.

Hatch them, Miss Benson ? said he, who ever thinks of hatching birds' eggs ?

Oh, then you eat them, said Frederick, or perhaps let your cook make puddings of them ?

No, indeed, replied Master Jenkins, I blow out the inside, and then run a thread through them, and give them to Lucy to hang up amongst her curiosities ; and very pretty they look, I assure you.

And so, said Miss Harriet, you had rather see a parcel of empty egg-shells, than hear a sweet concert of birds singing in the trees ? I admire your taste, truly !

Why, is there any harm in taking birds' eggs ?

said Miss Jenkins; I never before heard that there was.

My dear mamma, replied Miss Benson, has taught me to think there is harm in every action which gives causeless pain to any living creature; and I own I have a very particular affection for birds.

Well, said Miss Jenkins, I have no notion of such affections, for my part. Sometimes, indeed, I try to rear those which Edward brings home, but they are teasing troublesome things, and I am not lucky; to tell the truth, I do not concern myself much about them; if they *live* they *live*, and if they *die* they *die*. He has brought me three nests this day to plague me: I thought to have fed the birds before I came out, but being in a hurry to come to see you, I quite forgot it—Did you feed them, Edward? Not I, said he, I thought you would do it; 'tis enough for me to find the nests.

And have you actually left three nests of young birds at home without victuals! exclaimed Miss Harriet.

I did not think of them, but will feed them when I return, said Miss Jenkins.

Oh, cried Miss Benson, I cannot bear the thoughts of what the poor little creatures must suffer.

Well, said Master Jenkins, since you feel so much for them, I think, Miss Harriet, you will make the best nurse—What say you, Lucy, will you give the nests to Miss Benson? With all my heart, replied his sister; and pray do not plague me with any more of them.

I do not know that my mamma will let me accept them, said Miss Benson; but if she will, I shall be glad to do so,

Frederick enquired what birds they were, and Master Jenkins informed him there was a nest of linnets, a nest of sparrows, and another of blackbirds. Frederick was all impatience to see them ; and Miss Harriet longed to have the little creatures in her possession, that she might rescue them from their deplorable condition, and lessen the evils of captivity, which they now suffered in the extreme.

Her mamma had left her with her young companions, that they might indulge themselves in innocent amusements without restraint, but the tender-hearted Harriet could not engage in any diversion till she had made intercession in behalf of the poor birds: she therefore begged Miss Jenkins would accompany her to her mamma, in order to ask permission to have the birds' nests. She accordingly went, and made her request known to Mrs. Benson, who readily consented ; observing, that though she had a very great objection to her children's having birds' nests, yet she could not deny her daughter on the present occasion. Harriet, from an unwillingness to expose her friend, had said but little on the subject, but Mrs. Benson, having great discernment, concluded that she made the request from a merciful motive, and knowing that Miss Jenkins had no kind mamma to give her instruction, she thus addressed her :

I perceive, my young friend, that Harriet is apprehensive the birds will not meet with the same kind treatment from you, which she is disposed to give them. I cannot think you have any cruelty in your nature, but perhaps you have only accustomed yourself to consider birds as playthings, without sense of feeling ; to me, who am a great admirer of

the beautiful little creatures, they appear in a very different light; and I have been an attentive observer of them, I assure you.

Though they cannot speak our language, each kind has one of its own, which is perfectly understood by those of its own species; and so far intelligible to us as to convince us they are susceptible of joy, grief, fear, anger, and resentment; and *we* may easily discover, that they delight in associating with those of their own class, and pursue with alacrity the employments allotted them; from whence we may justly infer, that it is cruel to rob them of their young, deprive them of their liberty, separate them from their respective societies, or place them in situations where they are excluded from the blessings suited to their natures, for which it is impossible for us to give them an equivalent.

Besides, these creatures, insignificant as they appear in your estimation, were made by God as well as you. Have you not read in your Testament, my dear, that our Saviour said, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*? How then can you expect that God will send his blessing upon you, if you, instead of endeavouring to imitate him in being merciful to the *utmost of your power*, are wantonly cruel to innocent creatures which he designed for happiness?

This admonition from Mrs. Benson, which Miss Jenkins did not expect, made her look very serious, and brought tears into her eyes: on which the good lady took her by the hand, and kindly said, I wish not to distress you, my dear, but merely to awaken the natural sentiments of your heart; reflect at your leisure on what I have taken the liberty of say-

ing to you, and I am sure you will think me your friend. I knew your dear mamma, and can assure you she was remarkable for the tenderness of her disposition. But let me not detain you from your amusements; go to your own apartment, Harriet, and use your best endeavours to make your visitors happy. You cannot this evening fetch the birds, because when Miss Jenkins goes it will be too late for you to take so long a walk, as you must come back afterwards; and I make no doubt but that to oblige you she will feed them to-night.

Miss Harriet and Miss Jenkins returned, and found Frederick diverting himself with the hand-organ, which had lately been presented by his god-papa; but Master Jenkins had laid hold of Miss Harriet's dog, and was searching his own pocket for a piece of string, that he might tie him and the cat together, to see, as he said, how nicely they would fight; and so fully was he bent on this cruel purpose, that it was with difficulty he could be prevailed on to relinquish it.

Dear me, said he, if ever I came into such a house in my life, there is no fun here! What would you have said to Harry Pritchard and me the other day, when we made the cats fly?

Made the cats fly! said Frederick, how was that?

Why, replied he, we tied bladders on each side of their necks, and then flung them from the top of the house. There was an end of their purring and mewling for some time, I assure you, for they lay a long while struggling and gasping for breath; and if they had not had nine lives, I think they must have died: but at last up they jumped, and away they ran scampering. Then out came little Jemmy,

crying as if he had flown down himself, because we hurt the poor cats ; he had a dog running after him, who I suppose meant to call us to task with his *bow wow* ; but we soon stopped his tongue, for we caught the gentleman, and drove him before us into a narrow lane, and then ran hooting after him into the village ; a number of boys joined us, and cried out as we did, *a mad dog ! a mad dog !* On this several people pursued him with cudgels and broomsticks, and at last he was shot by a man, but not dead, so others came and knocked him about the head till he expired.

For shame ! Master Jenkins, said Miss Harriet, how can you talk in that rhodomontade manner ? I cannot believe any young gentleman could bring his heart to such barbarities.

Barbarities, indeed ! why, have we not a *right* to do as we please to dogs and cats, or do you think they *feel* as we do ? Fiddle faddle of your nonsense, say I ; come, you must hear the end of my story—When the dog was dead, we carried him home to little Jemmy, who was ready to break his heart for the loss of him ; so we did not like to stand hearing his whining, therefore left him and got a cock, whose legs we tied, and flung at him till he died. Then we set two others to fighting ; and fine sport we had, for one was pecked till his breast was laid open, and the other was blinded, so we left them to make up their quarrel as they could. After this we picked all the feathers off a live chicken, and you never saw such a ridiculous little animal in your life. Then we got some puppies, and drowned them while the mother stood by. Oh ! how she howled and cried, while they struggled on the surface of the

water; and there was no quieting her for several days.

Stop! stop! exclaimed Miss Harriet, for pity's sake, stop! I can hear no more of your horrid stories; nor would I commit even *one* of those barbarities which you boast of for the world! Poor innocent creatures! what had they done to you to deserve such usage!

I beg, Edward, said his sister, that you will find some other way to entertain us, or I shall really tell Mrs. Benson of you.

What! are you growing tender-hearted all at once, cried he.

I will tell you what I think when I go home, replied Miss Jenkins. As for poor Frederick he could not restrain his tears; and Harriet's flowed in a copious stream, with the bare idea of the sufferings of the poor animals, particularly for the live chicken, and the poor creature whose puppies were drowned in her sight; but Master Jenkins was so accustomed to be guilty of those things without reflection, that there was no making any impression of tenderness upon his mind; and he only laughed at their concern, and wanted to tell a long story about an ox that had been driven by a cruel drover till he went mad; but Master Benson and his sister stopped their ears. As soon as they left off doing so, he began another about bat-fowling, which is a treacherous custom of going with a lantern by night to the hedges, where birds roost, and frightening them into a net placed for the purpose. In short, it appeared from his discourse that he was acquainted with the whole art of tormenting animals.

: At last little Frederick went crying to his mamma,

and the young ladies retired to another apartment ; so Master Jenkins amused himself with catching flies in the window, pulling the legs off from some, and the wings from others, delighted with their contortions, which were occasioned by the agonies they endured. Mrs. Benson had some visitors, which prevented her talking to this cruel boy, as she otherwise would have done, on hearing Frederick's account of him, but she determined to tell his papa, which she accordingly did some time after, when he returned home ; but this gentleman, so far from reproving his son, applauded him as a lad of life and spirit, and said he would be fit to go through the world.

Master Jenkins was now disturbed from his barbarous sport by being called to tea ; and soon after that was over the servant came to fetch him and his sister. Miss Harriet earnestly entreated her friend Lucy to feed the birds properly, till she should be allowed to fetch them, who promised to do so ; for she was greatly affected with Mrs. Benson's discourse, and then entreated her brother to take leave, that she might return home ; with this he readily complied, as there were no further opportunities for cruelty.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER her little visitors were departed, Miss Harriet went into the drawing-room, and having paid her compliments sat herself down, that she might improve her mind by the conversation of the company. Her mamma perceived that she had been in tears, of which Frederick had before explained the cause. I do not wonder, my love, said she, that you should have been so affected with the relation of such horrid barbarities as that thoughtless boy has, by degrees, brought him-

self to practise, not only without remorse, but by way of amusement. However, do not suffer your mind to dwell on them, as the creatures on which he inflicted them are no longer objects of pity. It is wrong to grieve for the death of animals as we do for the loss of our friends, because they certainly are not of so much consequence to our happiness ; and we are taught to think their sufferings end with their lives, as they are not religious beings ; and therefore the killing them, even in the cruellest manner, is not like murdering a human creature, who is perhaps unprepared to give an account of himself at the tribunal of heaven.—I have, said a lady who was present, been for a long time accustomed to consider animals as mere machines, actuated by the unerring hand of Providence, to do those things which are necessary for the preservation of themselves and their offspring ; but the sight of the learned pig, which has lately been shewn in London, has deranged these ideas, and I know not what to think.

If we puzzle our minds for ever on the subject, madam, replied a gentleman who accompanied her, we shall never be able fully to comprehend the capacities and feelings of creatures so different from ourselves. That they have not reasonable souls, like the human race, is evident ; but at the same time I think we may plainly discover, that they have some portion of intellect, which is even capable of improvement to a certain degree: this is particularly exemplified in the instance which Mrs. Franks has just mentioned of the learned pig. Mere instinct, I think, would never lead that creature to distinguish one letter from another, or, which amounts to the same thing, to comprehend the various signs by which they are pointed out to him by his keeper. To what a pitch may dogs and horses

be improved ; nay, every kind of animal that I have had an opportunity of observing, seems to acquire sagacity, by a familiar intercourse with rational creatures ; yet, after all, they fall short of human reason beyond comparison.

For my part, replied Mrs. Benson, I find the subject so much above my comprehension, that whenever my mind is disposed to expatiate on it, I check the inclination, from an opinion that it is of no consequence to me whether animals have intellects or not, and that it is amongst those things which the Almighty has intentionally concealed from our penetration. That they are in the power of man, and subservient to his use and pleasure, gives them a sufficient claim to our compassion and kindness ; and while I am partly fed and clothed at the expense of the animal creation, I could not bring myself to inflict wanton cruelties upon them. On the other hand, as Providence has placed them so much beneath us in the scale of beings, I should think it equally wrong to elevate them from their proper rank in life, and suffer them to occupy that share of attention and love which is due to our own species only.

You are certainly right, madam, answered the gentleman, there are objects enow for the employment of human reason, without our endeavouring to penetrate into those things which must ever remain hidden, unless the inferior creatures were endued with speech, we can form but very imperfect ideas even of our own intellectual powers, still less of those of other men ; and the farther any creature is removed from us, the less capable are we of comprehending its nature, as we can only judge in these matters by what passes in ourselves.

Neither you, Sir, nor Mrs. Benson, said Mrs. Franks, mean, I apprehend, to discourage the study of the natural history of animals. By no means, replied the latter, for, as far as it is open to our view, it is replete with amusement and instruction. It leads the mind to contemplate the perfections of the Supreme Being, and also furnishes a variety of useful hints for the conduct of human affairs. Many important arts have, in all probability, been derived from animals; and the exact regularity with which they discharge the offices of tenderness and economy, affords examples of real utility to those amongst us who are disposed to neglect the duties of humanity. An idle person for instance, may be admonished by an ant or bee, a thoughtless mother by a hen, an unfaithful servant by a dog, and so on, as one of our poets has elegantly pointed out in his Fable*. I only mean that we should confine our speculations within due bounds, and not caress animals to the neglect of the human species.

Then you would condemn a lady of my acquaintance, said the gentleman, who has a little lap dog on which her happiness totally depends; and to use a vulgar expression, her very life seems to be wrapped up in his. I am sure it is quite provoking to see a reasonable creature make herself so ridiculous. It is more than ridiculous, replied Mrs. Benson, it is really sinful. At this instant the arrival of Mrs. Franks' coach was announced, and she, with the gentleman, took leave.

As soon as they were gone, Pray, mamma, said Harriet, what does the learned pig do? I had a great

* Gay's Fable of the Shepherd and Philosopher.

desire to ask Mrs. Franks, but was fearful she would think me impertinent.

I commend your modesty, my dear, replied Mrs. Benson, but would not have it lead you into such a degree of restraint as to prevent your gratifying that laudable curiosity, without which young persons must remain ignorant of many things very proper for them to be acquainted with. Mrs. Franks would, I am sure, have been far from thinking you impertinent. Those inquiries only are thought troublesome by which children interrupt conversation, and endeavour to attract attention to their own insignificant prattle, but all people of good sense and good nature delight in giving them useful information.

In respect to the learned pig, I have heard things which are quite astonishing in a species of animals generally regarded as very stupid. The creature was shewn for a sight in a room provided for the purpose, where a number of people assembled to view his performances. Two alphabets of large letters on card paper were placed on the floor; one of the company was then desired to propose a word which he wished the pig to spell: this the keeper repeated to the pig, which picked out every letter successively with his snout, and collected them together till the word was completed. He was then desired to tell the hour of the day, and some of the company held a watch to him; this he seemed with his little cunning eyes to examine very attentively; and having done so, picked out figures for the hour and minutes of the day. He exhibited a number of tricks of the same nature, to the great diversion of the spectators.

For my own part, though I was in London at the

time he was shewn, and heard continually of this wonderful pig from persons of my acquaintance, I never went to see him ; for I am fully persuaded, that great cruelty must have been exercised in teaching him things so foreign to his nature, and therefore would not give any encouragement to such a scheme.

And do you think, mamma, said Harriet, that the pig knows the letters, and can really spell words?

I think it possible, my dear, for the pig to be taught to know the letters one from the other, and that his keeper has some private sign, by which he directs him to each that is wanted ; but that he has an idea of *spelling* I can never believe ; nor are animals capable of attaining human sciences, because for these human faculties are requisite ; and no art of man can *change* the nature of any thing, though he may be able to improve that nature to a certain degree, or at least to call forth to view powers which would be hidden from us, because they would only be exerted in the intercourse of animals with each other. As far as this can be done by familiarizing them and shewing them such a degree of kindness as is consistent with our higher obligations, it may be an agreeable amusement, but will never answer any important purpose to mankind ; and I would advise you, Harriet, never to give countenance to those people who shew what they call *learned* animals, as you may assure yourself they exercise great barbarities upon them, of which starving them almost to death is most likely among the number ; and you may, with the money such a sight would cost you, procure for yourself a rational amusement, or even relieve some wretched creature from extreme distress. But, my dear, it is now time for you to retire to rest, I will therefore bid you good night.

CHAPTER X.

EARLY in the morning the hen Redbreast awakened her young brood. Come, my little ones, said she, shake off your drowsiness, remember this is the day fixed for your entrance into the world. I desire that each of you will dress your feathers before you go out, for a slovenly bird is my aversion, and neatness is a great advantage to the appearance of every one.

The father was upon the wing betimes, that he might give each of his young ones a breakfast before they attempted to leave the nest. When he had fed them, he desired his mate to accompany him as usual to Mr. Benson's, where he found the parlour window open, and his young friends sitting with their mamma. Crumbs had been, according to custom, strewed before the window, which the other birds had nearly devoured; but the Redbreasts took their usual post on the tea table, and the cock bird sang his morning lay; after which they returned with all possible speed to the nest, for, having so important an affair to manage, they could not be long absent. Neither could their young benefactors pay so much attention to them as usual, for they were impatient to fetch the birds' nests from Miss Jenkins's; therefore as soon as breakfast was ended they set out on their expedition. Harriet carried a basket large enough to hold two nests, and Frederick a smaller one for the other; thus equipped, with a servant attending them, they set off.

Mr. Jenkins's house was about a mile from Mr. Benson's, it was delightfully situated; there were a beautiful lawn and canal before it, and a charming garden behind; on one side were corn fields, and on

the other a wood. In such a delightful retreat as this it was natural to expect to find a great many birds; but, to Miss Harriet's surprise, they saw only a few straggling ones here and there, which fled with the utmost precipitation as soon as she and her brother appeared; on this she observed to Frederick, that she supposed Master Jenkins's practice of taking birds' nests had made them so shy, and entreated him never to commit so barbarous an action. She said a great deal to him about the cruelties that naughty boy had boasted of the evening before, which Frederick promised to remember.

As soon as they arrived at the house, Miss Jenkins ran out to receive them, but her brother was gone to school. We are come, my dear Lucy, said Miss Benson, to claim the performance of Master Jenkins's promise; how are your little prisoners?

O! I know not what to say to you, my dear, said Miss Jenkins, I have very bad news to tell you, and I fear you will blame me exceedingly, though not more than I blame myself. I heartily wish I had returned home immediately after the kind lecture your mamma favoured me with yesterday, which shewed me the cruelty of my behaviour, though I was then ashamed to own my conviction.

I walked as fast as I could all the way from your house, and determined to give each of the little creatures a good supper; for which purpose I had an egg boiled, and nicely chopped; I mixed up some bread and water very smooth, and put a little seed with the chopped egg amongst it, and then carried it to the room where I left the nests. But what was my concern when I found that my care was too late for the greatest part of them! Every Sparrow lay dead and

bloody: they seemed to have killed each other. Urged, I suppose, by extreme hunger, each spent on his unhappy associates those pecks and blows which were my proper desert.

In the nest of Linnets, which were very young, I found one dead, two just expiring, and the other almost exhausted, but still able to swallow; to him therefore I immediately dispensed some of the food I had prepared, which greatly revived him; and, as I thought he would suffer with cold in the nest by himself, I covered him over with wool, and had this morning the pleasure of finding him quite recovered.

What, all the Sparrows and three Linnets dead! said Frederick, whose little eyes swam with tears at the melancholy tale: and pray, Miss Jenkins, have you starved all the Blackbirds too?

Not all, my little friend, answered Miss Jenkins, but I must confess that some of them have fallen victims to my barbarous neglect: however, there are two fine ones alive, which I shall, with the surviving Linnet, cheerfully resign to the care of my dear Harriet, whose tenderness will, I hope, be rewarded by the pleasure of hearing them sing when they are old enough. But I beg you will stay and rest yourselves after your walk.

Let me see the birds first, said Frederick.

That you shall do, answered Miss Jenkins; and taking him by the hand, conducted him to the room in which she kept them, accompanied by Miss Benson. She then fed the birds, and gave particular instructions for making their food, and declared that she would never be a receiver of birds' nests any more; but expressed her apprehensions that it would be difficult to wean Edward from his propen-

sity for taking them ; however, said she, he is going as a boarder to a private academy soon, where I think he will have better employment for his leisure hours.

Miss Jenkins then took her young friends into the parlour to her governess (for her mamma was dead,) who received them very kindly, and gave each of them a piece of cake and some fruit : after which Miss Jenkins led them again into the room where the birds were, and very carefully put the nest, with the poor solitary Linnet, into one basket, and that with the two Blackbirds into the other. Frederick was very urgent to carry the latter, which his sister consented to ; and then bidding adieu to their friend, they set off on their return home, attended by the maid as before.

Well, Frederick, said Miss Harriet, as they walked along, what think you of bird-nesting now ? Should you like to occasion the death of so many little harmless creatures ? No, indeed, said Frederick ; and I think Miss Jenkins a very naughty girl for starving them.

She was to blame, but is now sorry for her fault, my dear, therefore you must not speak unkindly of her ; besides, you know she has no good mamma, as we have, to teach her what is proper ; and her papa is obliged to be absent from home very often, and leave her to the care of a governess, who perhaps was never instructed herself to be tender to animals.

With this kind of conversation they amused themselves as they walked, every now and then peeping into their baskets to see their little birds, which were very lively and well. They entreated the

maid to take them through the orchard, which had a gate that opened into a meadow that lay in their way, having no doubt of obtaining admittance, as it was the usual hour for their friend Joe to work there. They accordingly knocked at the gate, which was immediately opened to them, and Frederick requested Joe to shew him the Robin's nest. But before we proceed to this part of our history, we must return to the Redbreasts, whom we left on the wing, flying back to the ivy wall, in order to take their young ones abroad.

CHAPTER XI.

As the father entered the nest he cried out, with cheerful voice, Well, my nestlings, are you all ready? Yes, they replied. The mother then advanced, and desired that each of them would get upon the edge of the nest. Robin and Peckey sprang up in an instant, but Dicky and Flapsy, being timorous, were not so expeditious.

The hearts of the parents felt a rapturous delight at the advantageous view they now had of their young family, which appeared to be strong, vigorous, and lively; and, in a word, endued with every gift of nature requisite to their success in the world.

Now, said the father, stretch your wings, Robin, and flutter them a little, in this manner, (shewing him the way) and be sure to observe my directions exactly. Very well, said he; do not attempt to fly yet, for here is neither air nor space enough for that purpose. Walk gently after me to the wall; now hop and perch upon this branch, and as soon as you see me fly away, spread your wings, and exert all the strength you have to follow me.

Robin acquitted himself to admiration, and alighted very safely on the ground.

Now stand still, said the father, till the rest join us: then going back, he called upon Dicky to do the same as his brother had done; but Dicky was very fearful of fluttering his wings, for he had a great deal of cowardice in his disposition, and expressed many apprehensions that he should not reach the ground without falling, as they were such a great height from it. His father, who was a very courageous bird, was quite angry with him.

Why, you foolish little thing, said he, do you mean to stay in the nest by yourself and starve; I shall leave off bringing you food, I assure you. Do you think your wings were given you to be always folded by your sides, and that the whole employment of your life is to dress your feathers and make yourself look pretty? Without exercise you cannot long enjoy health; besides, you will soon have your livelihood to earn, and therefore idleness would in you be the height of folly; get up this instant.

Dicky, intimidated by his father's displeasure, got up, and advanced as far as the branch from which he was to descend; but here his fears returned, and, instead of making an effort to fly, he stood flapping his wings in a most irresolute manner, and suffered his father to lead the way twice without following him. This good parent, finding that he would not venture to fly, took a circuit, unperceived by Dicky, and watching the opportunity, when his wings were a little spread, came suddenly behind him, and pushed him off the branch. Dicky, finding himself in actual danger of falling, now gladly stretched his pinions, and upborne by the air, gently

descended to the ground so near the spot where Robin stood, that the latter easily reached him by hopping.

The mother now undertook to conduct Flapsy and Pecksy, whilst the father stayed to take care of the two already landed. Flapsy made a thousand difficulties, but at length yielded to her mother's persuasions, and flew safely down. Pecksy, without the least hesitation, accompanied her, and, by exactly following the directions given, found the task much easier than she expected.

As soon as they had a little recovered from the fatigue and fright of their first essay at flying, they began to look around them with astonishment. Every object, on which they turned their eyes, excited their curiosity and wonder. They were no longer confined to a little nest, built in a small hole, but were now at full liberty in the open air. The orchard itself appeared to them a world. For some time each remained silent, gazing around, first at one thing, then at another; at length Flapsy cried out, What a charming place the world is! I had no conception that it was half so big!

And do you suppose, then, my dear, replied the mother, that you now behold the whole of the world? I have seen but a small part of it myself; and yet have flown over so large a space, that what is at present within our view, appears to me a little inconsiderable spot; and I have conversed with several foreign birds, who informed me that the country they came from was so distant, that they were many days on their journey hither, though they flew the nearest way, and scarcely allowed themselves any resting time.

“Come,” said the father, let us proceed to business; we did not leave the nest merely to look about us. You are now, my young ones, safely landed on the ground, let me instruct you what you are to do on it. Every living creature that comes into the world has something allotted him to perform, and therefore should not stand an idle spectator of what others are doing. We small birds have a very easy task, in comparison of many animals I have had an opportunity of observing, being only required to seek food for ourselves, build nests, and provide for our young ones till they are able to procure their own livelihood.

We have indeed enemies to dread; hawks and other birds of prey will catch us up, if we are not upon our guard; but the worst foes we have are those of the human race; though even among them the Redbreasts have a better chance than many other birds, on account of a charitable action which a pair of our species are said to have performed towards a little boy and girl* who were lost in a wood, where they were starved to death. The Redbreasts I mean saw the affectionate pair, hand in hand, stretched on the cold ground, and would have fed them, had they been capable of receiving nourishment; but finding them quite dead, and being unable to bury them, resolved to cover them with leaves. This was an arduous task, but many a Redbreast has since shared the reward of it; and I believe that those who do good to others always meet with a recompence some way or other. But I declare I am doing the very thing I was reproving you for—chattering away when I

* Alluding to the Ballad of the Children in the Wood.

should be minding business. Come, hop after me, and we shall soon find something worth having. Fear nothing, for you are now in a place of security; there is no hawk near, and I have never seen any of the human race enter this orchard but the monsters who paid you visits in the nest, and others equally inoffensive.

The father then hopped away, followed by Robin and Dicky, while his mate conducted the female part of the family. The parents instructed their young ones in what manner to seek their food, and they proved very successful, for there were a number of insects just at hand.

●Dicky had the good fortune to find four little worms together; but, instead of calling his brother and sisters to partake of them, he devoured them all himself.

Are you not ashamed, you little greedy creature, cried his father, who observed his selfish disposition? What would you think of your brother and sisters were they to serve you so? In a family every individual ought to consult the welfare of the whole, instead of his own private satisfaction. It is his own truest interest to do so. A day may come when he who has now sufficient to supply the wants of his relations, may stand in need of assistance from them. But setting aside *selfish* considerations, which are the last that ever find place in a generous breast, how great is the pleasure of doing good and contributing to the happiness of others!

Dicky was quite confounded, and immediately hopped away, to find, if possible, something for his brother and sisters, that he might regain their good opinion.

In the mean while Robin found a caterpillar,

which he intended to take to Pecksy ; but just as he was going to pick it up, a Linnet, which had a nest in the orchard, snatched it from him and flew away with it.

Inflamed with the most furious rage, Robin advanced to his father, and entreated that he would fly after the Linnet and tear his heart out.

That would be taking violent revenge, indeed, said his father. No, Robin, the Linnet had as great a right to the caterpillar as you or I ; and, in all probability, has many little gaping mouths at home to receive it. But, however this may be, I had, for my own part, rather sustain an injury than take revenge. You must expect to have many a scramble of this kind in your life ; but if you give way to a resentful temper, you will do yourself more harm than all the enemies in the world can do you ; for you will be in perpetual agitation, from an idea that every one who does not act in direct conformity to your wishes, has a design against you. Therefore restrain your anger, that you may be happy ; for, believe me, peace and tranquillity are the most valuable things you can possess.

At this instant Pecksy came up with a fine fat spider in her mouth, which she laid down at her mother's feet, and thus addressed her: Accept, my dear parent, the first tribute of gratitude which I have ever been able to offer you. How have I formerly longed to ease those toils which you and my dear father endured for our sakes ; and gladly would I now release you from farther fatigue on my account, but I am still a poor inexperienced creature, and must continue to take shelter under your wing. All my power to assist you shall however be exerted, and I will hop as long as I am able to pro-

cure provisions for the family. The eyes of the mother sparkled with delight; and knowing that Pecksy's love would be disappointed by a refusal, she ate the spider, which the dutiful nestling had so affectionately brought her; and then said, How happy would families be, if every one like you, my dear Pecksy, consulted the welfare of the rest, instead of turning their whole attention to their own interest.

Dicky was not present at this speech, which he might have considered as a reflection on his own conduct; but he arrived as it was ended, and presented Pecksy with a worm, like those he had himself so greedily eaten. She received it with thanks, and declared it was doubly welcome from his beak.

Certainly, said the mother, fraternal love stamps a value on the most trifling presents. Dicky felt himself happy in having regained the good opinion of his mother and obliged his sister, and resolved for the future to be generous.

The young Redbreasts soon after, all collected together, near the gate which led into the meadow, when they were suddenly alarmed by a repetition of the same noises which had formerly so terrified them in the nest; and Robin, who was foremost, beheld, to his very great amazement, Master and Miss Benson, the maid who attended them, and Joe the gardener, who, having opened the gate, was, at the request of his young master and mistress, conducting them to the ivy-wall.

Robin, with all his courage, and indeed he was not deficient in this qualification, was seized with a great tremor; for if the view he had of the faces of these persons had appeared so dreadful to him when

he sat in the nest, what must it now be, to behold their full size, and see them advancing with, as he thought, gigantic strides towards him? He expected nothing less than to be crushed to death with the foot of one of them; and not having yet attained his full strength, and never having raised himself in the air, he knew not how to escape; therefore chirped so loudly as not only to surprise his brother and sisters, and bring his father and mother to inquire the meaning of his cry, but also to attract the attention of Master and Miss Benson.

What chirping is that? cried the latter.—It was, said the maid, the cry of a young bird; was it not one of those in the baskets? No, said Frederick, the noise came that way, pointing to some currant bushes.—My birds are very well, and so is my Linnet, replied Harriet.—Frederick then set down his charge very carefully, and began looking about in the place from whence he supposed the sound proceeded, when, to his great joy, he soon discovered the Redbreasts and their little family. He called eagerly to his sister, who was equally pleased with the sight. Frederick then stooped down to take a nearer view of them, by which means he directly fronted Robin, who, as soon as the young gentleman's face was on a level with his eyes, recollected him, and calling to his brother and sisters, told them they need not be afraid.

Miss Benson followed her brother's example, and delighted the little flock with the sight of her benign countenance. She heartily lamented having nothing with which to regale her old favourites and their family, when Frederick produced from his pocket a piece of biscuit, which they crumbled and scattered.

Miss Benson recollecting that her mamma would expect her at home, and that the birds in the basket would be hungry, persuaded her brother to take up his little load and return; they therefore left the Redbreasts enjoying the fruits of their bounty.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN the happy birds had shared among them the acceptable present made by their young benefactors, the mother reminded her mate that it would be proper to think of returning to the nest. If the little ones fatigue themselves too much with hopping about, said she, their strength will be exhausted, and they will not be able to fly back.

True, my love, replied her mate, gather them under your wings a little, as there is no reason to apprehend danger here, and then we will see what they can do. She complied with his desire, and when they were sufficiently rested, got up, on which the whole brood instantly raised themselves on their feet.

Now, Robin, cried the father, let us see your dexterity in flying upwards; come, I will shew you how to raise yourself.

Oh! you need not take that trouble, said the conceited bird; as I flew down I warrant I know how to fly up: then spreading his wings, he attempted to rise, but in so unskilful a manner, that he only shuffled along upon the ground.

That will not do, however, cried the father; shall I shew you now? Robin persisted in it that he stood in no need of instruction, and tried again; he managed to raise himself a little way, but soon tumbled headlong. His mother then began reproving him for his obstinacy, and advised him to accept his father's kind offer of teaching him.

You may depend on it, Robin, said she, that he is in every respect wiser than you ; and as he has had so much practice, he must of course be expert in the art of flying ; and if you persist in making your own foolish experiment, you will only commit a number of errors, and make yourself ridiculous ; I should commend your courage, provided you would add prudence to it ; but blundering on in this ignorant manner is only rashness.

Let him alone, let him alone, said the father ; if he is above being taught he may find his own way to the nest, I will teach his brother. Come, said he, Dicky, let us see what you can do at flying *upwards*, you cut a noble figure this morning when you flew *down*.

Dicky, with reluctance, advanced ; he said he did not see what occasion they had to go back to the nest at all ; he should suppose they might easily find some snug corner to creep into till they were strong enough to roost in trees, as other birds did.

Why you, said the father, are as ridiculous with your timidity as Robin with his conceitedness. Those who give way to groundless fears generally expose themselves to real dangers ; if you rest on the earth all night you will suffer a great deal from cold and damp, and may very likely be devoured, whilst you sleep, by rats and other creatures that go out in the night to seek for food ; whereas, if you determine to go back to the nest, you have but one effort to make, for which, I will venture to say, you have a sufficient degree of strength, and then you will lie warm, safe and quiet : however, do as you will.

Dicky began to think that it was his interest to obey his father, and said he would endeavour to fly

up, but was still fearful he should not be able to effect it.

Never despair, replied his father, of doing what others have done before you. Turn your eyes upwards, and behold what numbers of birds are at this instant soaring in the air. They were once all nestlings like yourself. See there that new fledged Wren, with what courage he skims along; let it not be said that a Redbreast lies grovelling on the earth while a Wren soars above him!

Dicky was now ashamed of himself, and inspired with emulation, therefore, without delay, spread his wings and his tail; his father with pleasure placed himself in a proper attitude before him, then rising from the ground led the way; and Dicky, by carefully following his example, safely arrived at the nest, which he found a most comfortable resting place after the fatigue of the morning, and rejoiced that he had a good father to teach him what was most conducive to his welfare.

The father having seen him safe home, returned to his mate, who, during his short absence, had been endeavouring to convince Robin of his fault, but to no purpose; he did not like to be taught, what he still persuaded himself he could do by his own exertions; she therefore applied herself to Flapsy.

Come, my dear, said she, get ready to follow me when your father returns, for the sun casts a great heat here, and the nest will be quite comfortable to you. Flapsy dreaded the experiment; however, as she could not but blame both Robin's and Dicky's conduct, she resolved to do her best; but entreated her mother to inform her very particularly how to proceed. Well then, said the tender parent, ob-

serve me. First bend your legs, then spring from the ground as quick as you can, stretching your wings as you rise straight out on each side of your body; shake them with a quick motion, as you will see me do, and the air will yield to you, and at the same time support your weight; whichever way you want to turn, strike the air with the wing on the contrary side, and that will bring you about. She then rose from the ground, and having practised two or three times repeatedly what she had been teaching, Flapsy at length ventured to follow her, but with a palpitating heart; and was soon happily seated in the nest by the side of Dicky, who rejoiced that his favourite sister was safely arrived.

The mother bird now went back to Pecky, who was waiting with her father till she returned; for the good parent chose to leave the female part of his family to the particular management of their mother.

Pecksy was fully prepared for the flight, for she had attentively observed the instruction given to the others, and also their errors; she therefore kept the happy medium betwixt self-conceit and timidity, indulging that moderated emulation which ought to possess every young heart; and, resolving that neither her inferiors nor equals should soar above her, she sprang from the ground, and with a steadiness and agility, wonderful for her first essay, followed her mother to the nest, who, instead of stopping to rest herself there, flew to a neighbouring tree, that she might be at hand to assist Robin, should he repent of his folly; but Robin disappointed her hopes, for he sat sulkily; though convinced he had been in the wrong, he would not humble himself to his father; who therefore resolved to leave him a little while and re-

turn to the nest. As soon as Robin found himself deserted, instead of being sorry, he gave way to anger and resentment. Why, cried he, am I to be treated in this manner, who am the eldest of the family, while all the little darlings are fondled and caressed? But I don't care, I can get to the nest yet, I make no doubt. He then attempted to fly, and after a great many trials, at length got up in the air, but knew not which way to direct his course; and sometimes turned to the right and sometimes to the left; now he advanced forwards a little, and now, fearing he was wrong, came back again; at length quite spent with fatigue, he fell to the ground, and bruised himself a good deal: stunned with the fall, he lay for some minutes without sense or motion, but soon revived; and finding himself alone in this dismal condition, the horrors of his situation filled him with dreadful apprehensions, and the bitterest remorse.

Oh! cried he, that I had but followed the advice and example of my tender parents, then had I been safe in the nest, blest with their kind caresses, and enjoying the company of my dear brother and sisters! but now I am of all birds the most wretched! never shall I be able to fly, for every joint of me has received a shock which I doubt it will not recover. Where shall I find shelter from the scorching sun, whose piercing rays already render the ground I lie on intolerably hot? What kind beak will supply me with food to assuage the pangs of hunger which I shall soon feel? By what means shall I procure even a drop of water to quench that thirst which so frequently returns? Who will protect me from the various tribes of barbarous animals which I have been

told make a prey of birds? Oh, my dear, my tender mother, if the sound of my voice can reach your ears, pity my condition, and fly to my succour.

The kind parent waited for no further solicitation, but darting from the branch on which she had been a painful eye-witness of Robin's fall, she instantly stood before him.

I have listened, said she, to your lamentations; and, since you seem convinced of your error, will not add to your sufferings by my reproaches; my heart relents towards you, and gladly would I afford you all the aid in my power: but, alas! I can do but little for your relief: however, let me persuade you to exert all the strength you have, and use every effort for your own preservation; I will endeavour to procure you some refreshment, and at the same time contrive means of fixing you in a place of more security and comfort than that in which you at present lie. So saying, she flew to a little stream which flowed in an adjacent meadow, and fetched, from the brink of it, a worm which she had observed an angler drop as she perched on the tree; with this she immediately returned to the penitent Robin, who received the welcome gift with gratitude.

Refreshed with this delicious morsel, and comforted by his mother's kindness, he was able to stand up, and, on shaking his wing, found that he was not so greatly hurt as he apprehended; his head, indeed, was bruised, so that one eye was almost closed, and he had injured the joint of one wing so that he could not possibly fly: however, he could manage to hop, and the parent bird observing that Joe the gardener was cutting a hawthorn hedge, which was near the spot, desired Robin to follow

her ; this he did, though with great pain. Now, said she, look carefully about, and you will soon find insects of one kind or another for your sustenance, during the remainder of the day, and before evening I will return to you again. Summon all your courage, for I make no doubt you will be safe while our friend continues his work, as none of those creatures which are enemies to birds will venture to come near him. Robin took a sorrowful farewell, and the mother flew to the nest.

You have been absent a long time, my love, said her mate, but I perceive that you were indulging your tenderness towards that disobedient nestling, who has rendered himself unworthy of it: however, I do not condemn you for giving him assistance, for had you not undertaken the task, I would myself have flown to him instead of returning home ; how is he, likely to live and reward your kindness?—Yes, said she, he will, I flatter myself, speedily recover, for his hurt is not very considerable ; and I have the pleasure to tell you, he is extremely sensible of his late folly, and I dare say will endeavour to repair his fault with future good behaviour ;—this is pleasing news indeed, said he.

The little nestlings delighted to hear their dear brother was safe and convinced of his error, expressed great joy and satisfaction, and entreated their father to let them descend again, and keep him company ; to this he would by no means consent, because as he told them, the fatigue would be too great ; and it was proper that Robin should feel a little longer the consequences of his presumption : to-morrow, said he, you shall pay him a visit, but to-day he shall be by himself : on this they dropped

their request; knowing that their parent was the best judge what was proper to be done; and not doubting but that his affection would lead him to every thing that was conducive to the real happiness of his family: but yet they could not tell how to be happy without Robin, and were continually perking up their little heads, fancying they heard his cries; both the father and mother frequently took a peep at him, and had the satisfaction of seeing him very safe by their friend Joe the gardener. But it is time to inquire after Master and Miss Benson.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS happy pair arrived at the house soon after they left the Redbreasts, and communicated every circumstance of their expedition to their kind mamma, who hearing their little prisoners in the basket chirp very loudly, desired they would immediately go and feed them, which they gladly did, and then took a short lesson. Mrs. Benson told Miss Harriet that she was going to make a visit in the afternoon, and should take her with her, therefore desired she would keep herself quite still, that she might not be fatigued after the walk she had in the morning; for though she meant to go in the coach, it was her intention to walk home, as the weather was so remarkably fine. The young lady took great care of the birds, and Frederick engaged with the assistance of the maid, to feed them during her absence. Miss Benson was then dressed to attend her mamma.

Mrs. Addis, to whose house they were going, was a widow lady; she had two children, Master Charles, a boy of twelve years old, at school, and Miss Augusta, about seven, at home. But these children were quite strangers to Miss Benson.

On entering the hall the young lady took notice of a very disagreeable smell, and was surprised with the appearance of a parrot, a paroquet, and a macaw, all in most superb cages. In the next room she came to were a squirrel and a monkey, which had each a little house neatly ornamented.

On being introduced into the drawing-room, she observed in one corner a lap dog, lying on a splendid cushion; and in a beautiful little cradle, which she supposed to contain a large wax doll, lay, in great state, a cat with a litter of kittens. In vain did Miss Harriet look for Mrs. Addis's children, for neither of them appeared.

After the usual compliments of salutation were over, I have, said Mrs. Benson, taken the liberty of bringing my daughter with me, madam, in hopes of inducing you to favour us, in return, with the company of Master and Miss Addis.

You are obliging, madam, replied the lady, but indeed I never take *my* children with me, they are so *rude*; on the contrary, I am obliged to keep the boy almost continually at school, for he is so cruel to my *dear little precious creatures*, that there is no bearing him *at home*; and as for Augusta, it will be time enough some years hence for her to go a visiting.

I am sorry to hear you say this, madam, said Mrs. Benson, but hope my daughter will at least be indulged with seeing Miss Addis to-day, or I shall think you are displeased at my bringing Harriet here. This in reality was the case, as Mrs. Benson perceived it, for the lady looked very cross: however, she could not refuse letting her daughter come into the drawing-room, as her guest particularly desired it.

Miss Harriet was very curious to examine the various animals which were collected together by this extraordinary lady; but as her mamma never suffered her to run about when she accompanied her to other people's houses, she sat down and kept quite still; only glancing her eye first to one part of the room, and then to the other, as her attention was successively attracted.

Mrs. Addis rang the bell, and ordered that Augusta might come to her. The footman, who had never before received such a command, (for Mrs. Addis only saw the child in the nursery), stared with astonishment, and thought he had mistaken it. However, on his mistress's repeating, that the little girl was to be brought down, he went to tell the nursery-maid to take her. What new fancy is this? said she. Who would ever have thought of *her* wanting the *child in the drawing-room*? I have no stockings clean for her, nor a frock to put on but what is all to pieces; I wish she would spend less on her *cats* and *dogs*, and *monkies*, and then her *child* might appear as she ought to do. I went go up stairs, Nanny, said the child, mamma is so cross to me. But you *must*, said Nanny; besides, there is a pretty young lady come to see you; and if you will go, like a good girl, you shall have a piece of sugared bread and butter for your supper, and you shall carry the new doll which your god-mamma gave you, to shew your little visitor.

These bribes had the desired effect, and Miss Augusta went into the drawing-room; but, instead of entering it like a young lady, with a genteel curtsy, she stopped at the door, hung down her head, and looked like a little simpleton. Miss Benson was so

surprised at her awkwardness that she did not know what to do, and looked at her mamma, who said, Harriet, my love, can't you take the little lady by her hand and lead her to me? I believe she is afraid of strangers. On this Miss Harriet arose to do so; but Augusta, apprehensive that she would snatch her doll away, was going to run out, only she was not able to open the door.

Mrs. Benson was quite shocked to see how sickly, dirty, and ragged this child was, and what a very vulgar figure she made for want of instruction; but Mrs. Addis was so taken up at that instant with the old lap-dog, which had, as she thought, fallen into a fit, that she did not mind her entrance; and, before she perceived it, the child went up to the cradle in order to put her doll into it, and seized one of the kittens by the neck, the squeaking of which provoked the old cat to scratch her, and this made her cry and drop the kitten on the floor. Mrs. Addis seeing this flew to the little beast, endeavoured to soothe it with caresses, and was going to beat Augusta for touching it, but Mrs. Benson interceded for her; though she could scarcely gain attention, Mrs. Addis being so greatly agitated.

Tea was now ordered, and Miss Augusta being urgent to go to her maid, Mrs. Benson thought it best she should be indulged; and therefore said, she was sure Harriet would not desire to detain her against her inclinations; and Augusta was dismissed by her mamma, without so much as one tender kiss or kind expression!

The tea things being set, the footman came in with the urn, which employing both his hands, he left the door open; and was, to the great terror of Miss

Harriet, and even of her mamma too, followed by the monkey they saw in the hall, which having broken his chain, came to make a visit to his lady; she, far from being disconcerted, seemed highly pleased with his cleverness. O my sweet dear Pug, said she, are you come to see us? Pray shew how like a gentleman you can behave. Just as she had said this he leaped upon the tea-table, and took cup after cup and threw them on the ground, till he broke half the set; then jumped on the back of his mistress's chair, and tore the cover of it; in short, as soon as he had finished one piece of mischief he began another, till Mrs. Addis, though vastly diverted with his wit, was obliged to have him caught and confined; after which she began making tea, and quietness was for a short time restored. But Mrs. Benson, though capable of conversing on most subjects, could not engage Mrs. Addis in any discourse, but upon the perfections of her birds and beasts; and a variety of uninteresting particulars were related concerning their wit or misfortunes.

On hearing the clock strike seven, she begged Mrs. Benson's excuse; but said she made it a constant rule to see all her dear darlings fed at that hour, and entreated that she and the young lady would take a turn in the garden in the mean while. This was very unpolite, but Mrs. Benson desired she would use no ceremonies with her, and was really glad of the respite it gave her from company so irksome, and Miss Harriet was happy to be alone with her mamma; she however forbore to make any remarks on Mrs. Addis, because she had been taught that it did not become young persons to censure the behaviour of those who were older than themselves.

The garden was spacious, but overrun with weeds; the gravel walks were so rough for want of rolling, that it was quite painful to tread on them; and the grass on the lawn so long, that there was no walking with any comfort, for the gardener was almost continually going on some errand or other for Mrs. Addis's darlings; so Mrs. Benson and her daughter sat down on a garden seat with an intention of waiting there till Mrs. Addis should summon them. Miss Harriet could not refrain from expressing a wish that it was time to go home; to which Mrs. Benson replied, that she did not wonder at her desire to return; but, said she, my dear, as the world was not made merely for us, we must endeavour to be patient under every disagreeable circumstance we meet with. I know what opinion you have formed of Mrs. Addis, and should not have brought you to be a spectator of her follies, had I not hoped that an hour or two passed in her company would afford you a lesson which might be useful to you through life. I have before told you, that our affections towards the inferior parts of the creation should be properly regulated; you have, in your friend Miss Jenkins and her brother, seen instances of cruelty to them, which I am sure you will never be inclined to imitate; but I was apprehensive you might fall into the contrary extreme, which is equally blameable. Mrs. Addis, you see, has absolutely transferred the affection she ought to feel for her child to creatures which would really be much happier without it. As for puss, who lies in the cradle in all her splendour, I will engage to say, she would pass her time pleasanter in a basket of clean straw, placed in a situation where she could occasionally amuse herself with catching

mice. The lap dog is, I am sure, a miserable object, full of diseases, the consequences of luxurious living. How enviable is the lot of a spaniel that is at liberty, to be the companion of his master's walks, when compared with his! Mr. Pug, I am certain, would enjoy himself much more in his native wood: and I am greatly mistaken if the parrots, &c. have not cause to wish themselves in their respective countries, or at least divided into separate families, where they would be better attended; for Mrs. Addis, by having such a number of creatures, has put it out of her power to see properly with her own eyes at all. But come, let us go back into the house; the time for our going home draws near, and I wish not to prolong my visit. Saying this she arose, and with her daughter went into the drawing room, which opened into the garden; the other door, which led to the adjoining apartments, was not shut, and gave them an opportunity of hearing what really distressed Mrs. Benson, and perfectly terrified the gentle Harriet.

Begone, wretch, says Mrs. Addis, begone this instant, you shall not stay a moment longer in this house. I hope, madam, you will have the goodness to give me a character; indeed, and indeed, I fed Poll, but I believe he got cold when you let him stand out of doors the other day.—I will give you no character, I tell you, so depart this instant; oh, my poor, dear, dear creature! I fear you will never recover.—John! Thomas! here, run this instant to Perkins the bird-catcher, perhaps he can tell me what to give him; then bursting into a flood of tears, she sat down and forgot her guests.

Mrs. Benson thought it necessary to remind her that she was in the house, and stepped to the door

to ask what was the matter. Mrs. Addis recollected herself sufficiently to beg pardon for neglecting to pay attention to her, but declared that the dreadful misfortune that had befallen her had made her insensible to every thing else.

What can be the matter? said Mrs. Benson. Have you heard of the death of a dear friend? has your child met with an accident?—Oh! no, said she, but poor Poll is taken suddenly ill; my dear Poll which I have had these seven years, and I fear he never will recover.

If this is all, madam, said Mrs. Benson, I really cannot pity you, nor excuse your behaviour to me; for it is an instance of disrespect which I believe no other person but yourself would shew me, and I shall take my leave of your house for ever: but, before I go, permit me to say, that you act in a very wrong manner, and will certainly feel the ill effects of your injustice to your fellow-creatures, in thus robbing them of the love you owe to them, to lavish it away on those who are really sufferers by your kindness.

At this instant the footman entered to inform Mrs. Benson that her servant was come; on which, accompanied by Miss Harriet, she, without further ceremony, left Mrs. Addis to compose herself as she could.

As they walked along, both Mrs. Benson and her daughter continued silent, for the former was greatly agitated, and the latter quite in consternation, at what had lately passed; but their attention was soon awakened by the supplication of a poor woman, who entreated them to give her some relief, as she had a sick husband and seven children in a starving condition: of which, she said, they might be eye-wit-

nesses if they would have the goodness to step into a barn that was very near.

The invitation of wretchedness was never given in vain to Mrs. Benson ; her heart was constantly awake to the tender feelings of humanity ; and taking her daughter by the hand, and desiring the servant to stop for her, she followed the woman, who conducted her to the abode of real woe, where she beheld a father, surrounded with his helpless family, whom he could no longer supply with sustenance, and he himself, though his disease was subdued, was almost on the point of expiring for want of some reviving cordial.

How came you to be in this condition, good woman ? said Mrs. Benson to his wife ; surely you might have obtained relief before your husband was reduced to such extremity.

Oh ! my good lady, said the woman, we have not been used to beg, but to earn an honest livelihood by our industry, and never till this sad day have I known what it was to ask charity : this morning, for the first time, I made application at the only great house in this village, where I made no doubt there was abundance. I told my dismal tale to a servant, and begged she would make it known to her mistress ; but she assured me it was in vain to come there, for her lady had such a family of cats, dogs, monkies, and all manner of creatures, that she had nothing to spare for poor people ; at the same instant I saw the poulterer bring a rabbit and a fowl, which I found were for the favourite cat and dog. This discouraged me from begging ; and I had determined to die before I would ask again ; but the sight of my dear husband and children in this condition drives me to it.

Well, comfort yourself, said Mrs. Benson.—Come to my house to-morrow morning, and we will see what we can do ; in the mean time here is something for a present supply. Mrs. Benson then departed, as she was fearful of walking late.

Miss Harriet was greatly affected at this scene, and could no longer help exclaiming against Mrs. Addis.

She is deserving of great blame, indeed, said Mrs. Benson ; but I have the pleasure to say, such characters as hers are very uncommon, I mean in the *extreme* ; though there are numbers of people who fall into the same fault in some degree, and make themselves truly ridiculous with their unnatural affections. I wish you, while you are young, to guard your mind against such a blameable weakness.

Miss Harriet assured her mamma that she should never forget either Mrs. Addis or the lesson she had received on the subject, and then expressed her satisfaction that they had met the poor woman. I rejoice sincerely, said Mrs. Benson, at having been fortunate enough to come in time to assist this poor wretched family, and hope, my love, you will, out of your own little purse, contribute something to-morrow towards their relief. Most willingly, said Harriet, they shall be welcome to my whole store.

They kept talking on this subject till they arrived at home. Little Frederick, who sat up an hour beyond his time, came out to meet them, and assured his sister that the birds were well and fast asleep. I think, said she, it is time for you and me to follow their example ; for my part, with my morning and evening walk together, I am really tired, so I shall beg leave to wish you a good night, my dear mamma ; papa, I suppose, will not be at home this week.—No, m-

dear, nor the next, said Mrs. Benson, for he has many affairs to settle in the west. I am rather fatigued also, and shall soon retire to rest.

CHAPTER XIV.

WE will now return to Robin, whom we left under the protection of Joe the gardener, though the honest fellow did not know of his own guardianship, and continued his work without perceiving the little cripple, who hopped and shuffled about, pecking here and there whatever he could meet with.

When he had been for some time by himself, his mother made him another visit, and told him she had interceded with his father, whose anger was abated, and he would come to him before he went to rest. Robin rejoiced to hear that there was a chance of his being reconciled to his father, yet he dreaded the first interview: however, as it must be, he wished to have it over as soon as possible; and every wing he heard beat the air he fancied to be that of his offended parent. In this state of anxious expectation he continued almost to the time of sun-setting, when of a sudden, he heard the well-known voice to which he used to listen with joy, but which now caused his whole frame to tremble; but observing a beam of benignity in that eye, in which he looked for anger and reproach, he cast himself in the most supplicating posture at the feet of his father, who could no longer resist the desire he felt to receive him into favour.

Your present humility, Robin, said he, disarms my resentment; I gladly pronounce your pardon, and am persuaded you will never again incur my displeasure; we will therefore say no more on a subject which gives so much pain to us.

Yes, my dear, my too indulgent father, cried Robin, permit me to make my grateful acknowledgments for your kindness, and to assure you of my future obedience. The delighted parent accepted his submission, and the reconciliation was completed. Robin now felt himself greatly relieved; but on his father's asking him what he intended to do with himself at night, his spirits sunk again, and he answered, he did not know. Well, said the father, I have thought of an expedient to secure you from cold at least.

In a part of the orchard, a very little way from hence; there is a place belonging to our friend the gardener, where I have sheltered myself from several storms, and am sure it will afford you a comfortable lodging; so follow me before it is too late. The old bird then led the way, and his son followed him; when they arrived, they found the door of the tool house open; and as the threshold was low, Robin managed to get over it. His father looked carefully about, and at last found, in a corner, a parcel of shreds, kept for the purpose of nailing up trees. Here, Robin, said he, is a charming bed for you, let me see you in it, and call your mother to have a peep, and then I must bid you good night; so saying, away he flew, and brought his mate, who was perfectly satisfied with the lodging provided for her late undutiful but now repentant son; but, reminded by her mate that if they stayed longer they might be shut in, they took leave, telling Robin they would visit him early in the morning.

Though this habitation was much better than Robin expected, and he was ready enough to own better than he deserved, yet he deeply regretted his absence from the nest, and longed to see again his brother and

sisters : however, though part of the night was spent in bitter reflections, fatigue at length prevailed over anxiety, and he fell asleep. The nestlings were greatly pleased to find that Robin was likely to escape the dangers of the night, and even the anxious mother at length resigned herself to repose.

Before the sun shewed his glorious face in the east, every individual of this affectionate family were awake : the father with impatience waited for the gardener's opening the tool-house ; the mother prepared her little ones for a new excursion.

You will be able to descend with more ease, my dears, to-day than you did yesterday, shall you not ? O yes, mother, said Dick ; I shall not be at all afraid ! Nor I, says Flapsy. Say you so ! then let us see which of you will be down first. Come I will shew you the way.

On this, with gradual flight, the mother bent her course to a spot near the place where Robin lay concealed ; they all instantly followed her, and surprised their father, who, having seen Joe, was every instant expecting he would open the door ; at length, to the joy of the whole party, the gardener appeared, and they soon saw him fetch his shears and leave the tool-house open ; on this the mother proposed that they should all go together and call Robin. There they found him in his snug little bed ; but who can describe the happy meeting ; who can find words to express the raptures which filled every little bosom !

When the first transports subsided, I think, said the father it will be best to retire from hence ; if our friend returns he may take us for a set of thieves, and suppose that we came to eat his seeds, and I should be sorry he should have an ill opinion of us. Well,

I am ready, said his mate; and we, cried the whole brood; they accordingly left the tool house, and hopped about among the currant bushes. I think, said the father, that you, who have the full use of your limbs, could manage to get up these low trees, but Robin must content himself upon the ground a little longer. This was very mortifying, but he had no one to blame excepting himself; so he forbore to complain, and assumed as much cheerfulness as he could: his brother and sisters begged they might stay with him all day, as they could do very well without going up to the nest; to this the parents consented.

At the usual hour of visiting Mrs. Benson's tea-table the affectionate pair took their morning's flight, and found the young gentleman and lady with their mamma. They had been up a long time, for Frederick had made in his bed-chamber a lodging for the birds, which had awakened both him and his sister at a very early hour, and they rose with great readiness to perform the kind office they had imposed upon themselves.

The two blackbirds were perfectly well, but the linnet looked rather drooping, and they began to be apprehensive they should not raise him, especially when they found he was not inclined to eat. As for the blackbirds, they were very hungry indeed; and their young benefactors, not considering that, when fed by their parents, young birds wait some time between every morsel, supplied them too fast, and filled their crops so full, that they looked as if they had great wens in their necks; and Harriet perceived one of them gasping for breath. Stop, Frederick, said she, as he was carrying the quill to its mouth, the bird is so full he can hold no more; but she spoke

too late: the little creature gave his eyes a ghastly roll, and fell on one side suffocated with abundance. Oh! he is dead! he is dead! cried Frederick. He is, indeed, said Miss Benson, but I am sure we did not design to kill him: and it is some satisfaction to think that we did not take the nest.

This consideration was not sufficient to comfort Frederick, who began to cry most bitterly; his mamma hearing him, was apprehensive he had hurt himself, for he seldom cried unless he was in great pain; she therefore hastily entered the room, to inquire what was the matter, on which Miss Harriet related the disaster that had happened. Mrs. Benson then sat down, and taking Frederick in her lap, wiped his eyes, and giving him a kiss, said, I am sorry, my love, for your disappointment; but do not afflict yourself, the poor little thing is out of his pain now, and I fancy suffered but for a short time. If you keep on crying so you will forget to feed your *flock* of birds, which I fancy, by the chirping I heard from my window, are beginning to assemble. Come, let me take the object of your distress out of your sight, it must be buried; then carrying the dead bird in one hand and leading Frederick with the other, she went down stairs.

While she was speaking, Miss Harriet had been watching the other blackbird, which she had soon the pleasure to see perfectly at his ease.

She then attempted to feed the linnet, but he would not eat. I fancy, Miss, said the maid, he wants air. That may be the case, indeed, replied Miss Benson, for you know, Betty, this room, which has been shut up all night, must be much closer than the places birds build in. Saying this she

opened the window, and placed the linnet near it, waiting to see the effect of the experiment, which answered her wishes ; and she was delighted to behold how the little creature gradually smoothed his feathers, and his eyes resumed their native lustre ; she once more offered him food, which he took, and quite recovered. Having done all in her power for her little orphans, she went to share with her brother the task of feeding the daily pensioners ; which being ended, she seated herself at the breakfast table by her mamma.

I wonder, said Frederick, who had dried up his tears, that the Robins are not come. Consider, replied his sister, that they have a great deal of business to do, now their young ones begin to leave their nest ; they will be here by and by, I make no doubt.

While she was speaking the servant entered, and informed them that a poor woman was at the gate, who was ordered to attend in the morning. Mrs. Benson desired she might come up. Well, good woman, said the benevolent lady, how does your husband do this morning ? Thanks to your goodness, madam, and the blessing of God, quite cheery.

I am happy, said the lady, to find you in better spirits than you were last night, and do not doubt you will do very well. I will order some meat and bread to be sent you every day this week, and will also assist you in clothing the children. Harriet's eyes glistened with benevolence at seeing the woman, whose distress had so greatly affected her, thus comforted ; and slipping her purse, which contained seven shillings, into her mamma's hand, begged she would take it for the woman. You shall, my dear,

said Mrs. Benson, have the pleasure of relieving her yourself; give this half-crown to her. Miss Harriet, with a delight which none but the compassionate can know, extended the hand of charity. The woman received her benefaction with grateful acknowledgments; and, praying that the Almighty might shower down his choicest blessings on this worthy family, respectfully took leave and returned to her husband, who, by means of the nourishment Mrs. Benson supplied her with, gathered strength hourly.

She was scarcely gone out of the room when the Redbreasts entered, as I before related. The sight of them perfectly restored Frederick's cheerfulness; and after they were departed he requested his mamma that he and Harriet might go again to the orchard in hopes of seeing the young Robins. That you shall do, Frederick, said she, upon condition that you continue a very good boy; but as yesterday was rather an idle day with you, you must apply a little closer to-day; and Harriet has a great deal of business to do, therefore you must wait till evening, and then perhaps I may go with you. Frederick was satisfied with this promise, and took great pains to learn to read and spell. He repeated by heart one of Mrs. Barbauld's hymns, and some other little things which he had been taught; and Miss Benson applied herself to a variety of different lessons with great assiduity, and performed her task of work entirely to her mamma's satisfaction.

CHAPTER XV.

As soon as the old Redbreasts left their little family, in order to go to Mr. Benson's, Pecksy, with great solicitude, began to ask Robin where he had

hurt himself, and how he did? Oh! said he, I am much better; but it is a wonder I am now alive, for you cannot think what a dreadful fall I had. With turning about as I did in the air, I became quite giddy, so could not make the least exertion for saving myself as I was falling; and came with great force to the ground; you see how my eye is still swelled, and it was much more so at first. My wing is the worst, and still gives me a good deal of pain; observe how it drags on the ground; but, as it is not broke, my father says it will soon be well; and I hope it will be so, for I long to be flying, and shall be glad to receive any instructions for the future. I cannot think how I could be so foolishly conceited, as to suppose I knew how to conduct myself without my father's guidance.

Why, young creatures, like us, said Pecksy, certainly stand in need of instruction, and ought to think ourselves happy in having parents who are willing to take the trouble of teaching us what is necessary for us to know. I dread the day when I must quit the nest and take care of myself. Flapsy said she made no doubt they should know how to fly and peck, and do every thing before that time; and, for her part, she longed to see the world, and to know how the higher ranks of birds behaved themselves, and what pleasures they enjoyed; and Dicky declared he felt the same wishes, though he must confess he had great dread of birds of prey.—Oh, said Flapsy, they will never seize such a pretty creature as you, Dicky, I am sure:—Why, if beauty can prevail against cruelty, you will also be secure, my sweet sister, replied he, for your delicate engaging shape must plead in your behalf.

Just as he had finished his speech, a hawk appeared in sight, on which the whole party was seized with a most uncommon sensation, and involuntarily threw themselves on their backs, screaming with all their might! and at the same instant the cries of numbers of little birds besides echoed through the orchard. The Redbreasts soon recovered, and rising on their feet, looked about to see what was become of the cause of their consternation; when they beheld him high in the air, bearing off some unhappy victim, a few of whose feathers fell near the young family, who on examining them found they belonged to a goldfinch; on which Pecksy observed that it was evident these savages paid no attention to personal beauty. Dicky was so terrified he knew not what to do, and had thoughts of flying back to the nest; but, after Robin's misfortune, was fearful of offending his father; he therefore got up into a currant-bush, and hid himself in the thickest part of the leaves. Flapsy followed him; but Robin being obliged to keep on the ground, Pecksy kindly resolved to bear him company.

In a few minutes their parents returned from Mr. Benson's, and found the two latter pretty near where they had left them; but missing the others, the mother with great anxiety inquired what was become of them. Robin then related how they had been frightened with a hawk; and, while he was doing so, they returned to him again.

• I am surprised, said the father, that a hawk should venture so near the spot where the gardener was at work. Pecksy informed him that they had not seen him since he left them. Then I dare say he is gone to breakfast, replied the mother: and this was

the case, for they at this instant saw him return with his shears in his hand, and soon pursue his work. Now you will be safe, cried the father; I shall therefore stay and teach you to fly in different directions, and then your mother and I will make some little excursions, and leave you to practise by yourselves; but first of all let me shew you where to get water, for I fear you must be very thirsty. No, said they, we have had several wet worms and juicy caterpillars, which have served us both for victuals and drink—Robin is very quick at finding them. There is nothing like necessity to teach birds how to live, said the father; I am glad Robin's misfortunes have been so beneficial to him. What would have become of you, Robin, if you had not exerted yourself as I directed? said his mother; you would soon have died, had you continued to lie on the scorching ground. Remember from this instance, as long as you live, that it is better to use means for your own relief, than to spend time in fruitless lamentations.

In respect to hawks, said the father, they are frightful creatures to be sure; but there are very few of them in comparison of most other birds, and they can take but one at a time, therefore it is a very great chance whether any of you is that one; your best way will be to keep as near to houses as you can, and make yourselves familiar with mankind, and then I think you will be in little danger. By the way, let me observe how greatly indebted you are to this good gardener, whom I hope you no longer call a *monster*. Oh, no! said Flapsy, he is a dear good creature. But I was going to say, cried the father, that, at any rate, it would be wrong to

make your life unhappy with apprehensions : you cannot keep hawks away by fearing them ; and it is possible you may never see another ; besides, what thousands escape, in comparison of the few they devour ! But come along, Dicky, Flapsy, and Pecksy, there is water so near, that Robin can hop as far. He then conducted them to a pump, from whence Joe watered the garden ; and under its spout they found an ample supply of that delightful element, more acceptable to them than the most costly wine would have been.

Here they staid some time, and were greatly amused ; still so near the gardener, that they regarded themselves as under his protection. The parent flew up into a tree, and there the father entertained his beloved mate and family with his cheerful music ; and sometimes they made various airy excursions for examples to their little ones, who all longed to imitate them. In this manner the day passed happily away, and early in the evening, Flapsy, Pecksy, and Dicky, were conducted to the nest ; they mounted the air with much more ease than the preceding day, and the parents instructed them how to fly to the branches of some trees which stood near to the ivy-wall.

In the mean time they had left Robin by himself, thinking he would be safe while the gardener was mowing some grass ; but what was the grief of both father and mother when they returned, and could neither see nor hear him ! The gardener too was gone ; they therefore apprehended that a cat or rat had taken Robin away and killed him, yet none of his feathers were to be seen ; with the most anxious

search they explored every recess in which they thought it possible for him to be, and strained their little voices till they were hoarse with calling him, but all in vain; the tool-house was locked: but had he been there he would have answered: at length, quite in despair of finding him, with heavy hearts they returned to the nest; a general lamentation ensued, and this lately happy abode was now the region of sorrow. The father endeavoured to comfort his mate and surviving nestlings, and so far succeeded, that they resolved to bear the loss with patience.

After a mournful night, the mother left the nest early in the morning, unwilling to relinquish the hope which still remained of finding Robin again; but, having spent an hour in this manner, she returned to her mate, who was comforting her little ones.

Come, said he, let us take a flight; if we sit lamenting here for ever it will be to no purpose: the evils which befall us must be borne, and the more quietly we submit to them the lighter they will be. If poor Robin is dead, he will suffer no more; and if he is not, so much as we fly about, it is a chance but we get tidings of him; suppose these little ones attempt to fly with us to our benefactors? If we set out early, and let them rest frequently by the way, I think they may accomplish it. This was very pleasing to every one of the little ones, for they longed to go thither; and accordingly it was determined that they should immediately set out, and they accomplished the journey by easy stages; at length they all arrived in the court, just after the daily pensioners were gone.

Now, said the father, stop a little, and let me advise you, Dicky, Flapsy, and Pecksy, to behave yourselves properly; hop ~~off~~ fly where you see your mother and me hop, and do not meddle with any thing but what is scattered on purpose. Stay, father, said Dicky, my feathers are sadly rumped; and so are mine, said Flapsy. Well, smooth them then, but don't stand finicking for an hour. Pecksy was ready in an instant, but the others were very tedious; so their father and mother would wait for them no longer, and flew into the window; the others directly followed them, and, to the inexpressible satisfaction of Master Benson, alighted on the table, where they met with a very unexpected pleasure; for who should they find there, as a guest, but the poor, lost Robin!

The meeting was, you may be sure, a happy one for all parties; and the transports it occasioned may be easier conceived than described. The father poured forth a loud song of gratitude; the mother chirped, she bowed her head, clapped her wings, basked on the tea-table, joined her beak to Robin's, then touched the hand of Master Frederick. As for the young ones, they twittered a thousand questions to Robin; but, as he was unwilling to disturb his father's song, he desired them to suspend their curiosity to another opportunity. But it is now time to satisfy your's, my young readers, and therefore I shall inform you by what means Robin was placed in this happy situation.

CHAPTER XVI.

You may remember that Master Frederick obtained from his mamma a promise, that when the

business of daily instruction was finished, he and his sister should go into the orchard in search of the Robins; as soon, therefore, as the air was sufficiently cool, she took them with her, and arrived just after the parent birds had taken their young ones back to the nest. Robin was then left by himself, and kept hopping about; and fearing no danger, got into the middle of the walk. Frederick descried him at a distance, and eagerly called out, there's one of them, I declare; and, before his mamma observed him, he ran to the place, and clapped his little hand over it, exulting that he had caught it. The pressure of his hand hurt Robin's wing, who sent forth piteous cries; on which Frederick let him go, and said, I won't hurt you, you little thing.

Miss Harriet, who saw him catch the bird, ran as fast as possible to prevent his detaining it; and perceived as Robin hopped away that he was lame, on which she concluded that her brother had hurt him; but, on Frederick's assuring her that his wing hung down when he first saw him, Mrs. Benson said it was most likely he was lamed by some accident, which had prevented his going with the others to the nest; and if that is the case, said she, it will be humane and charitable to take care of him.

Frederick was delighted to hear her say so, and asked whether he might carry it home? Yes, said his mamma, provided you can take him safely, Shall I carry it, madam? said Joe, he can lie nicely in my hat. This was an excellent scheme, and all parties approved of it; so Frederick took some of the soft grass which was mowed down, to put at the bottom,

and poor Robin was safely deposited in this vehicle, which served him for a litter ; and, perceiving into what hands he was fallen, he inwardly rejoiced, knowing that he had an excellent chance of being provided for, as well as of seeing his dear relations again. I need not say that great care was taken of him, and you will easily suppose he had a more comfortable night than that he had passed in the shed.

When Master and Miss Benson arose the next morning, one of their first cares was to feed the birds, and they had the pleasure to see all their nestlings in a very thriving condition ; both the linnet and the blackbird now hopped out of their nest to be fed, to the great diversion of Master Frederick : but his pleasure was soon damped by an unlucky accident ; for the blackbird being placed in a window which was open, hopped too near the edge, and fell to the ground, where he was snapped up by a dog, and torn to pieces in an instant. Frederick began to lament as before ; but, on his sister's reminding him that the creature was past the sense of pain, he restrained himself, and turned his attention to the linnet, which he put into a cage, that he might not meet the same fate. He then went to feed the flock, and to inquire after Robin, whom Mrs. Benson had taken into her own room, lest Frederick should handle and hurt him ; to his great joy he found him much better, for he could begin to use his injured wing. Frederick was therefore trusted to carry him into the breakfast parlour, where he placed him, as has been already described.

For some time the young Redbreasts behaved very well ; but at length Dicky, familiarized by the kind treatment he met with, forgot his father's injunctions,

and began to hop about in a very rude manner ; he even jumped into a plate of bread and butter ; and having a mind to taste the tea, hopped on the edge of a cup ; but, dipping his foot in the hot liquor, he was glad to make a hasty retreat, to the great diversion of Master Frederick. Flapsy took the freedom of pecking at the sugar, but found it too hard for her tender beak. For these liberties their mother reproved them, saying she would never bring them with her again, if they were guilty of such rudeness as to take what was not offered them.

As their longer stay would have broke in on a plan which Mrs. Benson had concerted, she rung her bell, and the footman came to remove the tea things ; on which the old birds, having taken leave of Robin, and promised to come again the next day, flew out at the window, followed by Dicky, Flapsy, and Pecksy. Robin was safely deposited in a cage, and passed a happy day, being often allowed to hop out, in order to be fed.

The parent birds alighted in the court, and conducted their little ones to the water which was set out for them, after which they all retired to the nest ; here the young ones rested till the afternoon, and then their parents took them out, in order to shew them the orchard. /

CHAPTER XVII.

You have not yet, said the father seen the whole extent of this place, and I wish to introduce you to our neighbours. He then led the way to a pear tree, in which a linnet had built her nest. The old linnets seemed much pleased to see their friends the Red-breasts, who, with great pride, introduced their little family to them. My own nestlings are just ready to

fly, said the hen linnët, and I hope will make acquaintance with them; for birds so well instructed as, I make no doubt your offspring are, must be very desirable companions. The little Redbreasts were quite delighted with the hopes of having some agreeable friends; and the old ones replied, that they had themselves received so much pleasure from social friendship, that they wished their young ones to cultivate the same.

They then flew on to a cherry tree, in which were a pair of chaffinches in great agitation, endeavouring to part one of their own brood and a young sparrow, which were engaged in a furious battle: but in vain; neither of the combatants would desist, till the chaffinch dropped dead to the ground. His parents were greatly shocked at this accident; on which the cock Redbreast attempted to comfort them with his strains; but, finding them deaf to his music, he begged to know the cause of the quarrel which had so fatal a conclusion.

Oh! answered the hen chaffinch, my nestling is lost through his own folly. I cautioned him repeatedly not to make acquaintance with sparrows, knowing they would lead him into mischief; but no remonstrances would prevail. As soon as he began to peck about, he formed a friendship with one of that voracious breed, who undertook to teach him to fly and provide for himself; so he left his parents, and continually followed the sparrow, who taught him to steal corn, and other things, and to quarrel with every bird he met; I expected to see him killed continually. At length his companion grew tired of him, and picked a quarrel, which ended as you have seen. However, this is better than if he had been caught

by men, and hung up, as I have seen many a bird, for a spectacle, to deter others from stealing.

Let me advise you, my young friends, said she, addressing herself to the little Redbreasts, to follow your parents' direction in every respect, and avoid bad company. She then, accompanied by her mate, flew back to her nest, in order to acquaint the rest of the family with this dreadful catastrophe, and the Redbreasts took another flight.

They alighted on the ground, and began pecking about, when all of a sudden they heard a strange noise, which rather alarmed the young ones. Their father desired them to have no fears, but follow him; he led them to the top of a high tree, in which was a nest of magpies. They had the day before made an excursion round the orchard, and were conversing on what they had seen, but in such a confused manner, that there was no such thing as understanding them; one chattered of one thing, and one of another. In short, all were eager to speak, and none inclined to hear.

What a set of foolish, ill-bred little creatures are these, said the cock Redbreast; if they would talk one at a time, what each says might afford entertainment to the rest; but, by chattering altogether in this manner, they are quite disagreeable. Take example from them, my nestlings, and avoid the fault, which renders them so ridiculous.

So saying, he flew on, and they soon saw a cuckoo surrounded by a number of birds, who had been pecking at her till she had scarce a feather left upon her breast, while she kept repeating her own dull note, *Cuckoo! Cuckoo!* incessantly. Get back again to your own country, said a thrush, what business have

you in ours, sucking the eggs, and taking the nests of any bird you meet with? Sure it would be sufficient could you have the privilege of building for yourself, as we do who are natives; but you have no right to seize upon our labours and devour our offspring.—The cuckoo deserves his fate, said the hen Redbreast: though I am far from bearing enmity to foreign birds in general, I detest such characters as his. I wonder mankind do not drive cuckoos away; but I suppose it is on account of their being the harbingers of summer.

How different is the character of the swallow; he comes here to enjoy the mildness of the climate, and confers a benefit on the land by destroying many noxious insects. I rejoice to see that race sporting in the air, and have had high pleasure in conversing with them; for, as they are great travellers they have much to relate. But come, let us go on.

They soon came to a hollow tree. Peep into this hole, said the cock bird to his young ones; they did so, and beheld a nest of young owls. What a set of ugly creatures, said Dicky: surely you do not intend to shew your frightful faces in the world! Did ever any one see such dull eyes, and such a frightful muffle of feathers!

Whoever you are that reproach us with the want of beauty, you do not shew your own good sense, replied one of the little owls; perhaps we may have qualities which render us as amiable as yourselves: you do not appear to know that we are *night* and not *day* birds: the quantity of feathers in which we are muffled up is very comfortable to us when we are out in the cold; and I can shew you a pair of eyes, which, if you are *little birds*, will frighten you out

of your wits ; and, if I could fly, I would let you see what else I could do. He then drew back the film that was given him, that the strong light of the day might not injure his sight, and stared full at Dicky, who was struck with astonishment.

At that instant the parent owl returned ; and, seeing a parcel of strangers looking into her nest, she set up a screeching, which made the whole party take wing. As soon as they stopped to rest, the cock Redbreast, who was really frightened, as well as his mate and family, recollected himself, and said, Well, Dicky, how did you like the owl's eyes ? I fancy they proved brighter than you expected ; but, had they even been as ugly as you supposed, it was very rude and silly in you to notice it. You ought never to censure any bird for natural deformities, since no one contracts them by choice ; and what appears disagreeable to you, may be pleasing in the eyes of another. Besides, you should be particularly careful not to insult strangers, because you cannot know their deserts, nor what power they may have of revenging themselves. You may think yourself happy if you never meet one of these owls by night, for, I assure you, they often feed upon little birds like us : and you have no reason to think they will spare you, after the affront you have given them. But come, let us fly on.

They soon alighted on a tree, in which was a mock-bird *, who, instead of singing any note of his own, kept successively imitating those of every bird that inhabited the orchard, and this with a view of

* A mock-bird is properly a native of America, but is introduced here for the sake of the moral.



making them ridiculous. If any one had a natural imperfection in his singing, he was sure to mimic it, or if any was particularly attentive to the duties of his station, he ridiculed them as grave and formal. The young Redbreasts were excessively diverted with this droll creature: but their father desired them to consider whether they should like to hear him mimic them. Every one agreed that they should be very angry to be ridiculed in that manner. Then, replied the father, neither encourage nor imitate him. The mock-bird hearing him, took up his notes, *Neither encourage nor imitate him*, said he. The cock Redbreast on this flew at him with fury, plucked some feathers from his breast, and sent him screaming from the place. I have made you sing a *natural note* at last, said he, and hope you will take care how you practise *mimickry* again. His mate was sorry to see him disturb his temper, and ruffle his feathers, for such an insignificant creature; but he told her it was particularly necessary as an example to his nestlings, as *mimickry* was a fault to which young birds were too apt to incline; and he wished to shew them the danger they exposed themselves to in the practice of it.

The whole Redbreast family rested themselves for some time; and whilst they sat still observed a chaffinch flying from tree to tree, chattering to every bird he had any knowledge of; and his discourse seemed to affect his hearers greatly, for they perceived some birds flying off in great haste, and others meeting them; many battles and disputes ensued. The little Redbreasts wondered at these circumstances; at length Pecksy inquired the meaning of the bustle. The chaffinch, replied the father, is a

tell-tale; it is inconceivable the mischief he makes. Not that he has so much malice in his nature: and therefore every anecdote he can collect he tells to all he meets, by which means he often raises quarrels and animosities; neither does he stop here, for he frequently invents the tales he relates.

As the Redbreast was speaking, the chaffinch alighted on the same tree. O, my old friend, said he, are you got abroad in the world again? I heard the linnet in the pear-tree say you were caught stealing corn, and hung up as a spectacle, but I thought this could not be true; besides, the blackbird in the cherry-tree told me that the reason we did not see you as usual was—that you were rearing a family, to whom, he said, you were so severe, that the poor little creatures had no comfort of their lives.

Whatever you may have heard, or whatever you may say, is a matter of indifference to me, replied the Redbreast; but as a neighbour, I cannot help advising you to restrain your tongue a little, and consider before you communicate your intelligence, whether what you are going to say has not a tendency to disturb the peace of society.

Whilst he was thus advising him, a flock of birds assembled about the tree; it consisted of those to whom the chaffinch had been chattering, who, having come to an explanation with each other, had detected his falsities, and determined to expel him the orchard; which they did, with every mark of contempt and ignominy: all the Redbreasts joined in the pursuit, for even the little ones saw his character in a detestable light, and formed a determination to avoid his fault. When the tell-tale was gone, the party which pursued him alighted together in the same

walk, and amongst them the Redbreasts discovered many of their old friends, with whom they now renewed their acquaintance, knowing they should soon be released from family cares; and the young ones passed a happy day in this cheerful assembly; but at length the hour of repose approached, when each individual flew to his resting place; and the Redbreasts, after so fatiguing a day, fell asleep.

Let us leave them to enjoy the comfort of the nest, and inquire after their young benefactors.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As soon as the breakfast things were removed at Mrs. Benson's, she informed her son and daughter, that she intended to take them with her to Farmer Wilson's, where she made no doubt they would pass a happy day; and desired them to go and get equipped for the journey, while she dressed herself. The young folks obeyed without hesitation; and, having given their maid very strict injunctions to feed Robin and the Linnet, they attended their mamma to the coach; and, after a delightful ride, arrived at the farm-house, where they were received with the utmost respect by Mrs. Wilson.

Farmer Wilson was a very worthy man, possessed of a great share of natural good sense and benevolence of heart. He had, by his industry, acquired sufficient to purchase the farm he lived on, and had a fair prospect of making a comfortable provision for a numerous family, whom he brought up with the greatest care, and taught them all to be merciful to the cattle which were employed in his business.

His wife was a most amiable woman, and had received a good education from her father, who was

formerly curate of the parish. This good man had strongly implanted in his daughter's mind the Christian doctrine of UNIVERSAL CHARITY, which she exercised, not only towards the human species, but also extended it to poultry, and every living creature it was her province to manage.

Mrs. Benson knew that her children would here have an opportunity of seeing many different animals treated with *propriety*; and it was on this account that she took them with her, though she herself complied with an invitation she had received the day before, and visited these good people from a motive of sincere respect.

As soon as they were seated, Mrs. Wilson regaled her young guests with a piece of nice cake, made by her daughter Betsy, a little girl of twelve years old, who sat by, enjoying, with a secret delight, the honour which the little lady and gentleman did to her performance. It happened fortunately to be a cool day, and Mrs. Benson expressed a desire to walk about and see the farm.

In the first place Mrs. Wilson shewed her the house, which was in every respect perfectly neat, and in complete order. She then took her guests into her dairy, which was well stored with milk and cream, butter and cheese. From thence they went to visit the poultry-yard, where the little Bensons were excessively delighted indeed: for there were a number of cocks and hens, and many broods of young chickens, besides turkeys and Guinea fowls.

All the fowls expressed the greatest joy at the sight of Mrs. Wilson and her daughter Betsy; the cocks celebrated their arrival by loud and cheerful crowings; the hens gave notice of their approach by

cackling, and assembled their infant train to partake of their bounty ; the turkeys and Guinea fowls ran to meet them ; a number of pigeons also alighted from a pigeon-house. Betsy scattered among them the grain which she carried in her lap for that purpose, and seemed to have great pleasure in distributing it.

When their young visitors were satisfied with seeing the poultry fed, Mrs. Wilson shewed them the hen-house, and other conveniences provided for them, which were excellently calculated to make their lives comfortable ; and then opened a little door, which led to a meadow, where the fowls were often indulged to ramble and refresh themselves. On seeing her approach this place, the whole party collected, and ran into the meadow, like a troop of school-boys into their play-ground.

You, Mrs. Wilson, and your daughter, must have great amusement with these pretty creatures, said Mrs. Benson.—We have indeed, Madam, and they furnish us with eggs and chickens, not only for our own use, but for the market also.—And can you prevail on yourself to kill these sweet creatures ? said Miss Benson. Indeed, Miss, I cannot, said Mrs. Wilson, and never did kill a chicken in my life ; but it is an easy matter to find people capable of doing it ; and there is an absolute necessity for some of them to die, for they breed so fast, that in a short time we should have more than we could possibly feed : but I make it a rule to render their lives as happy as possible, never shut them up to fatten any longer than I can help, use no cruel methods of cramming them, nor confine them in a situation where they can see other fowls at liberty ; neither do

I take the chickens from the hen till she herself deserts them, nor set hens upon ducks' eggs.

I often regret, said Mrs. Benson, that so many lives should be sacrificed to preserve ours; but we must eat animals, or they would at length eat us, at least all that would otherwise support us.

Whilst this conversation passed, Master Frederick had followed the fowls into the meadow, where the turkey-cock, taking him for an enemy, had attacked him, and frightened him so much, that he at first cried out for help, but soon recollected that this was cowardly, so he pulled off his hat and drove the creature away before Betsy Wilson arrived, who was running to his assistance.

The farmer's wife next proposed (but with many apologies for offering to take them to such a place) to shew them her pigsties. The name of a pigsty generally conveys an idea of nastiness; but whoever had seen those of Farmer Wilson would have had a very different one. They were neatly paved, and washed down every day; the troughs in which they fed were frequently scoured, and the water they drank was always sweet and wholesome. The pigs themselves had an appearance of neatness, which no one could have expected in such kind of animals; and though they had not the ingenuity which the *learned pig* appears to have, there was really something intelligent in their gruntings, and a very droll arch expression in the eyes of some of them. They knew their benefactors, and found means of testifying their joy at seeing them; which was increased when a boy, whom Mrs. Wilson had ordered to bring some bean shells, emptied his basket before them. Now a contest ensued who should have the

largest share, and each began pushing the other's side, and stuffing as fast as he could, lest they should have more than himself.

Miss Benson said she could not bear to see such greediness. It is, indeed, replied Mrs. Benson, very disagreeable, even in such creatures as these, but how much more so in the human species; and yet how frequent is this fault amongst children in particular! Pray look at these pigs, Frederick, and tell me if you ever remember to have met with a little boy who ate strawberries as these pigs do bean-shells? Frederick's cheeks, at this question, were covered with conscious blushes; on which his mamma kindly kissed him, and said she hoped he had seen enough of greediness to-day to serve him for a lesson as long as he lived.

In a separate sty was a sow with a litter of young pigs. This was a very pleasing sight indeed to Master Frederick, who longed to have one of them to play with; but Mrs. Wilson told him it would make the sow very angry, and her gruntings would terrify him more than the turkey-cock had done; on which he dropped his request, but said he should like to keep such a little creature.

If it would always continue little, Frederick, said Mrs. Benson, it would do very well; but it will perhaps grow as large as its mother, and what shall we do then; familiarized by the kind treatment which I am sure you would give it, we should have it following you into the parlour, and perhaps run grunting after you into your bedchamber. I myself knew an instance of a person who nursed up a sick pig, which actually ran after her to church, and became the most troublesome thing you can conceive.

I suppose your hogs are very profitable as well as your poultry; Mrs. Wilson? said Mrs. Benson. Yes, madam, replied she, we cure a good deal of bacon, and pickle a quantity of pork; we sell a great many sucking pigs, so that we are well paid for keeping them; and I never suffer them to be neglected in any particular; and have the pleasure of thinking few pigs are happier than mine.—But I fear, ladies, you will be tired with staying here; will it be agreeable to you to take a walk in the garden? With all my heart, said Mrs. Benson.

Mrs. Wilson then conducted her guests into a garden, which abounded with all kinds of vegetables for the table, quantities of fruit, and a variety of flowers. Master Frederick longed to taste some of the delicacies which presented themselves to his eye; but he had been taught never to gather fruit or flowers without leave, nor ask for any: however, Mrs. Wilson, with his mamma's permission, treated him and his sister with some fine apples and pears, which Betsy gathered and presented in cabbage leaves, and then took them to a shady arbour, where they sat and enjoyed their feast. After which they went to see the bees which were at work in glass hives.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE sight of the bees was a great entertainment, not only to the children, but to Mrs. Benson also, who was excessively pleased with the ingenuity and industry with which these insects collected their honey and wax, formed their cells, and deposited their store. She had by books acquired a knowledge of the natural history of bees, which enabled her to

examine their work with much greater satisfaction than she would have received from the sight of them, had she been only taught to consider them as little stinging creatures which it was dangerous to approach. This is quite a treat to me, indeed, said she to Mrs. Wilson, for I never before had an opportunity of seeing bees work in glass hives.

Madam, said the good woman, few will be at the expense of them ; and indeed my neighbours laugh at me, and call me very whimsical and extravagant for indulging myself with them ; but I find my account in keeping bees thus, even upon a principle of economy ; for as I do not destroy them, I have greater numbers to work for me, and more honey every year than the last, notwithstanding I feed my bees in the winter. I have made acquaintance with the queen of every hive, who will come to me whenever I call her, and you shall see one of their majesties if you please.

On this she called in a manner which the inhabitants of the hive they were looking at were accustomed to, and a large bee soon settled on her hand ; in an instant after she was covered, from head to foot, with bees.

Miss Benson was fearful lest they should sting, and Frederick was running away ; but Mrs. Wilson assured them the little creatures would not do any mischief, if no one attempted to catch them. Bees are, in their natural dispositions, very harmless creatures, I assure you, Master Benson, said she ; though I own they will certainly sting little boys who endeavour to catch them in order to suck their bag of honey, or take out their sting : but you see, that though I have hundreds about me, and even on my face and arms,

not one offers to do me an injury; and I believe wasps seldom sting but in their own defence. She then threw up her hand, which the queen-bee regarded as a signal of dismissal, and flew away in great state, surrounded by her guards, and followed by the rest of her subjects, each ready to lose his own life in the defence of her's.

There is something very wonderful, said Mrs. Benson, in the strong attachment these little creatures have to their sovereign, and very instructive too. I wish our good king could see all his subjects as closely united in his interest!—What say you, Frederick, would you fight for your king?—Yes, mamma, if papa would.—That, I assure you, my dear, he certainly would do, if there were occasion, as loyally as the best bee in the world: and I beg you will remember what I now tell you as long as you live, that it is your duty to love your king, for he is to be considered as the father of his country.

But mamma, said Frederick, it is the queen that the bees love, and we have a queen too.—Yes, my dear, we have so; and I believe her majesty is as much honoured by her subjects as a queen-bee in her hive, though she has not so full a command over them; for it is a king that governs England, as your papa governs his family.

But before we take our leave of the bees, let me observe to you, my dears, that several instructive lessons may be taken from their example.

If such little insects as these perform their daily tasks with so much alacrity, surely it must be a shame for children to be idle, and to fret, because they are put to learn things which will be of the utmost consequence to them in the end; and which would in-

deed conduce to their present happiness, would they but apply to them with a willing mind.

Science of various kinds presents itself to the human race, as the different flowers offer themselves to bees; and nothing is wanting to extract the sweets but an application to those faculties of which they are by nature possessed. As the industrious bee flies successively to every fragrant plant within his reach, so do you, my dear children, go from one branch of knowledge to another: but observe, the bee does not fly giddily from flower to flower, merely to take a transient view of its beauties, he *rests* on each till he has obtained all that will answer his purpose: imitate him in this particular also, and be not hurried on, by vain curiosity, from book to book, so as to gain only a superficial knowledge in the different branches of education; but remember that the bee applies the materials he collects to purposes valuable to himself, and to the community to which he belongs.

But come, Mrs. Wilson, we must, if you please, think of retiring from this place; for if we stay here much longer, we shall not have time to enjoy the pleasures you have in reserve for us. On this Mrs. Wilson said she was ready to wait on them.

As they walked along Miss Benson took notice of a variety of beautiful insects, and Frederick so far forgot himself as to run after a moth and catch it; but his mamma obliged him to let it go immediately. Don't you think, Mrs. Wilson, said she, that it is very wrong to let children catch butterflies and moths?—Indeed I do, madam, replied the good woman. Poor little creatures, what injury can they do us by *flying about*? In that state, at least, they are harmless to us. Caterpillars and snails, it is true, we

are obliged frequently to destroy on account of their devouring fruit and vegetables; but unless they abound so as to be likely to do real injury, I never let them be meddled with. I often think on my good father's maxim, which was, Never to take away the life of any creature, unless it is necessary for the benefit of mankind. While there is food and room enough in the world for them and us, let them live and enjoy the blessings they were formed for, he would say.

When I was a little girl, said Mrs. Benson, I had a great propensity to catch flies and other insects, but my father had an excellent microscope, in which he shewed me a number of different objects; by this means I learnt that even the minutest creatures might be as susceptible of pain as myself; and I declare I cannot put any thing to death without fancying I hear its bones crack, and that I see its blood gushing from its veins and arteries; and so far from having a pleasure in killing even the disagreeable insects which are troublesome in houses, I assure you I cannot do it myself, nor see it done without pain; and yet they certainly may be considered as enemies, and as such we have a right to destroy them.

To be sure, madam, said Mrs. Wilson, for without cleanliness we could not enjoy health. It goes against me to demolish a fine spider's web, and yet they make a house look very dirty; but I seldom have any in mine: for I took care, when I first came to live in it, to destroy the nésts; and the old spiders finding there was no security for their young ones here, have forsaken the house; and I am inclined to think the same vigilance in respect to other disagreeable insects would have the same effect.

Doubtless, said Mrs. Benson; but, pray tell me; do you destroy the webs of garden spiders also? Not unless they are so many as to be troublesome and disagreeable, replied Mrs. Wilson, I should not myself like to have the fruits of my industry demolished, nor my little ones taken out of my arms, or from their warm beds, and crushed to death.—I am of opinion, said Mrs. Benson, that it would be a good way to accustom one's self, before one kills any thing, to change situations with it in imagination.

For instance, if I accidentally disturb an ant's nest, instead of crushing the little creatures, with thoughtless inhumanity, as a set of insignificant atoms, I can fancy them appearing to me of the same magnitude a solar microscope would shew them, and one of them addressing me in this manner—Step aside, I entreat you, and let me and my associates pass in safety, that we may repair the mischief you have done to our city. The magazine of corn is fallen in, and I fear my dear parents are buried in the ruins: I hear the lamentations of my mate for the danger of our little ones; and behold two of my dear friends, which you have trod upon, in the agonies of death.—Why do you treat with such barbarity a set of innocent beings, that have never wilfully done you the least injury? Do we ever sting the human race but in our own defence? Do you really want the fruit we eat? and can the small quantity of corn we hoard up be missed from your plentiful stores? Is it not misfortune enough for us that we are the prey of birds, but must mankind, to whom thousands of us would not afford even a single meal, destroy us for sport? Oh, rather ye, whose hearts are alive to the sentiments of humanity, plead our cause to the

thoughtless part of your own species, and, as lords of the creation, drive away from us those natural enemies, which you may see darting down to devour us! If you love your own offspring, think of ours; and if you would be prosperous in your own occupations, protect those that afford a lesson of industry, which the wisest of mankind has recommended to your serious consideration.

Indeed, madam, said Mrs. Wilson, I have often wished that poor dumb creatures had somebody to speak for them; many an innocent life would then be saved which is destroyed to no end.

Well, said Harriet, I am sure I shall never kill any thing without first magnifying it in my mind, and thinking what it would say for itself if able to speak. —Then, my dear, I will engage for you, replied her mamma, that you will put but very few creatures to death: but, in order to have a proper notion of their form, you must study natural history, from whence you will learn how wonderful their construction is; how carefully and tenderly the inferior creatures provide for their young; how ingenious their various employments are; how far they are from harbouring malice against the human species; and how excellently they are formed and instructed by their great Creator, for the enjoyment of happiness in their different classes of existence, which happiness we have certainly no right wantonly to disturb.

Besides, it is really a meanness to destroy any creature merely because it is *little*: and, in children, particularly absurd to do so; for, upon this principle, they must themselves expect to be constantly ill-treated; though no animal stands more in need of tenderness than they do for many years from the time of their coming into the world: and even men

and women might expect to be *annihilated* by the power of the great CREATOR if every thing that is *little* were to be destroyed.

Neither do I know how we can *precisely* call any thing *great* or *little*, since it is only so by comparing it with others. An ant or fly may appear to one of its own species, whose eyes are formed to see those parts which *we* cannot discover without *glasses*, as considerable as men and women do to each other ; and to creatures of the dimensions of a mite, one of the size of an ant doubtless looks formidable and gigantic. I therefore think it but justice to view insects with *microscopic* eyes before we commit cruel devastations upon them.

During this conversation Master Frederick kept running about making choice of flowers, which Betsy Wilson gathered and formed into nosegays for his mamma, his sister, and himself.

CHAPTER XX.

THE next place Mrs. Wilson took her guests to was a barn-yard, in which was a large horse-pond. Here her young visitors were delighted with the appearance of a number of geese and ducks ; some were swimming in the water, some diving, others routing in the mud to see what fish or worms they could find.

It appears very strange to me, said Miss Benson, that any creatures can take delight in making themselves so dirty ; and yet, replied Mrs. Benson, how many *children* do the same, without having any excuse for it. The ducks and geese grub about so in search of the necessaries of life ; but I have seen boys do it merely for diversion, and sometimes at the hazard of their lives.

Very true, madam, said Mrs. Wilson ; my little

Neddy had like to have been drowned no longer ago than last Monday. He is a little venturesome rogue, and runs through thick and thin when pleasure is in view; but I fancy he will not hunt ducks about any more; for my part I do not like any of my children should make sport of teasing animals. I wish every creature I keep to enjoy happiness to the day of its death; and when it must be killed, to have it dispatched by the quickest means possible.

Have you any fish here, said Frederick? I believe none of any consequence, Sir; the ducks and the geese would take care that none should grow to any considerable size; but there are plenty in a pond which you will see in the next field; and I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at dinner eat some perch which were caught there. Sometimes we catch fine carp and tench, but only with nets; for neither my good man nor I can bear the cruel diversion of angling; nor do we allow our children to follow it, from a notion that it hardens the heart and leads to idleness.

Pray, mamma, said Miss Harriet, is it right to catch fish? I should think, as they live in water, and we upon land, we have no business with them. You would wish every one then, my dear, to keep to their own element? Your sentiment is a good one in many respects, but it must not be extended so far as to forbid the eating of fish. Man has dominion over the fish, as well as over beasts and fowls, and many of them are excellent food for mankind; and the astonishing increase of them shews that they are designed to be so; for were all that are spawned to grow to full size, there would soon be more than our ponds, or even than the sea itself would hold, and they would be starved; therefore there are the same

reasons for our feeding on them as poultry, but we should be very careful to dispatch them as quickly as possible.

Some people are cruel enough to roast lobsters alive, the criss of which I have been told are dreadful to hear; and others will flay eels alive, then put them without their skins into a pail of cold water, and afterwards cut them in pieces, and throw them into a frying-pan of boiling fat, where sometimes every separate piece will writhe about in agony. Thus each poor fish suffers as many deaths as it is divided into pieces. Now, Harriet, this cannot be right, however authorized by custom; therefore I hope you never will suffer such things to be done in your kitchen when you keep house, but always give orders that your lobsters be put into boiling water, which kills them soon, and that your eels are killed before they are skinned, which may soon be done by laying hold of their heads and tails and giving them a sudden pull, which separates the vertebræ of the back. This is dreadful enough, though little in comparison of what they suffer by the other methods.

Oh, mamma! said Harriet, you make me even shudder; I do not believe I shall ever desire to eat eels; I shall be ready to make speeches for every piece as it lies in a dish before me. But, pray tell me, is it cruel to kill frogs and toads? Ask Mrs. Wilson, my dear, she has more to do with such reptiles than I have.—Why, Miss, replied Mrs. Wilson, I am very singular, in regard to such kind of creatures; and though I by no means like to have them in my house, do not make an outcry and condemn every one to a violent death which is accidentally found in my cellars or other places; on the con-

trary, I generally see it thrown into a ditch at some distance to take its chance. There are many birds and water-fowl that feed on young frogs and toads, which will in general keep them from multiplying so as to be a nuisance to us; and it is time enough for us to take arms against them if there happens to be a very extraordinary increase of them. My good man is as particular in respect to moles; if he finds them in his garden, or any other part of his grounds where they can do mischief, he has them killed; but never suffers them to be molested where they are harmless. Neither does he hunt after snakes, or permit any one belonging to him to do so; for he says that, if they are not disturbed, they will not come from their haunts to annoy us; and to kill for the sake of killing is cruel.

Pray, Mrs. Wilson, said Frederick, do your sons ever go a bird's nesting?—No, Sir, said she, I hope I have not a child amongst my family capable of such barbarity. In the course of the summer they generally have young birds to nurse, which fall out of their nests or lose their parents, but are seldom lucky enough to raise them; and we have only one in a cage which they reared last summer. Yet we have plenty of singing; for the sweet creatures, finding they may enjoy themselves unmolested in the trees, treat us with their harmony from morning to night, of which you had a specimen in the garden. Sparrows, indeed, my husband is under a necessity of destroying, for they are such devourers, they would leave him but little corn to carry to market if he did not shoot them; but he never kills the crows, because they are very serviceable in picking up grubs, and other things injurious to farmers; we only set a little boy to

watch our new-sown grain, and he keeps making a noise which effectually frightens them. Oh, said Frederick, I nurse young birds too. I have got a linnet and a Robin Redbreast, and feed an hundred beside.

Mrs. Wilson smiled, and addressing herself to Mrs. Benson, said, Now, madam, we will if you please, return to the house ; for I fancy by this time dinner is nearly ready, and my husband and sons are about coming home.

Mrs. Benson was a little tired with her ramble, and was really impatient to see farmer Wilson and the rest of his amiable family. When she drew near the house she was met by the worthy man, who gave her a most cordial welcome, and said he was proud to see so much good company. Nancy, the eldest daughter, to whom the mother had entrusted the care of inspecting the additional cookery which she had ordered, and who for that reason, was not to be seen in the morning, now made her appearance, dressed with the most perfect neatness; health blooming in her cheeks, and cheerfulness and good humour sparkling in her eyes. With this engaging countenance she easily prevailed on Master Frederick to let her place him by her at the table, round which the two other visitors, the master and mistress of the house, and the rest of their offspring, consisting of Thomas, a fine youth of eighteen, four young boys, and little Betsy, were soon seated.

The table was covered with plain food, but, by the good management of Nancy, who had made an excellent pudding, an apple-pie, and some delicious custards, it made a very good figure ; and Mrs. Benson afterwards declared, that she had never enjoyed an entertainment so much. It was considerably

heightened by the happy countenances of the whole family.

The farmer, who was a jocose man, said a number of droll things, which diverted his little visitors very much; and soon after dinner he begged leave to depart, as he was sheep-shearing; but said, he thought the young gentlefolks might be diverted with the sight, so invited them to pay him a visit in the field, and left Joe and Neddy to conduct Master Frederick.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE young farmers were rather shy at first, being afraid that their guests would laugh at their country talk; but when they observed how politely they behaved to their sisters, they entered into conversation, and told Master Benson an hundred particulars about animals, with which he was before unacquainted; and he in return related all he knew about his Redbreasts and other pensioners. They then shewed him a pretty cat with kittens, and also their favourite Daphne, with two young puppies; the latter were kept in a kennel, and the cat in a stable, where they were well supplied with food.

As Frederick knew that his sister was remarkably fond of cats, he stepped back to call her to look at them, which, with her mamma's permission, she was greatly pleased to do, and longed to have the kittens to nurse. When she returned she enquired whether the dogs and cats were ever permitted to come into the house.

Not whilst they have young ones, said Mrs. Wilson, for they make a great deal of dirt, and are very troublesome at that time; but when puss has brought up her family, which is designed for the stable, she

shall be admitted amongst us again; for she is a very useful creature, and deserves to be well treated, but I do not suffer my children to handle her; I think it looks very ugly for any one to be all over scratches. Daphne is admitted to a greater share of familiarity; she is very faithful, and extremely good natured; but we never feed her in the house, for there is no doing so without greasing the floors.

I am of opinion, said Mrs. Benson, that a difference should be made between our treatment of cats and dogs. There is something very savage in the nature of the former; and though they certainly are deserving of our kindness on account of their usefulness, yet they cannot make themselves so agreeable as dogs; and there is really something very formidable in their talons and teeth; and, when enraged, a cat is no better than a little tigress.

Besides, were there not danger to one's self in nursing cats, there is no doing it without injury to one's linen; for, when puss is best pleased, she generally tramples with her talons unsheathed, by which practice many a fine apron has been torn. And even the cleanliness of cats is injurious, for they usually have recourse to corners of chairs, in order to rub the dirt from their talons. Many people have a great dread of this animal, and on that account it should not be used to come into rooms in which a variety of company is received.

As for dogs, they are in general so very social, grateful, and pleasing, that they seem formed to be the humble companions of mankind; and if kept in proper order, they may be familiarized with safety; but then they should be well educated, and taught to know their distance. And as there are different

species of them we should make a prudent selection, and not introduce into the house great mastiffs or tall greyhounds; neither must we indulge those we domesticate to too great a degree, for in that case they will become as troublesome as cats.

Mrs. Benson now expressed her desire to see the sheep-shearing; on which Mrs. Wilson and her daughter conducted her and Miss Harriet to the field, where they arrived at the conclusion of the operation; and a very pleasing sight it was to behold the happy creatures, who lately waddled under a heavy heating load, relieved from their burden, leaping and frisking with delight, while the accumulated wool, seemed, as it lay, to promise comfortable clothing for many a naked wretch among the human species, who, destitute of such a supply, would be in danger of perishing with cold in the ensuing winter.

Miss Harriet observed the innocent countenances of the sheep and lambs, and said she thought it was a thousand pities to kill them.

It is so, my dear, said her mamma, but we must not indulge our feelings too far in respect to animals which are given us for food; all we have to do is to avoid barbarity. It is happy for them that they have no apprehension of being killed, and therefore enjoy life in peace and security to the very last; and even when the knife is lifted to their throats, are ignorant of its destination; and a few struggles put an end to their pain for ever. But come, Mrs. Wilson, will you favour us with a sight of your cows?—With pleasure, madam; they are by this time driven up to be milked. She then conducted her visitors towards the farm-yard.

Perhaps, madam, said Mrs. Wilson, as they walk-

ed along, the young lady and gentleman may be afraid of horned cattle; I believe, replied Mrs. Benson, I may venture to say that Harriet has no unreasonable fears of any living creatures; it has been my endeavour to guard the minds of my children against so distressing a weakness; but whether Frederick's heart has acquired fortitude enough to enable him to venture near so many cows, I cannot tell.—O yes, mamma, cried Frederick, I would sooner get up and ride into the yard on the horns of one of them than run away.—Well, we shall soon put your courage to the proof, said Mrs. Benson; so come along, sir.

As for my children, said Mrs. Wilson, they are remarkably courageous in respect to animals: all the creatures belonging to us are very harmless and gentle, which is the natural consequence of kind treatment, and no person need be afraid of walking in any part of our grounds; but it is difficult to persuade some people that there is no danger, for they are apt to imagine that every loose horse they see will gallop over them, and that every creature with horns will gore and toss them.

Very true, replied Mrs. Benson; and I have known many as much afraid of a toad, a frog, or a spider, as if certain death would be the consequence of meeting them: when, if these persons would but make use of their reason, they would soon be convinced that such fears are ill-grounded. Frogs and toads are very harmless creatures, and so far from offering an injury to any human being they may chance to meet, hop away with all possible expedition, from a dread of being themselves destroyed; and spiders drop suddenly down, with a view to their own preservation only; and therefore it is highly ridiculous to be afraid of them.

Horses and oxen are much more formidable creatures ; they certainly could do us a great deal of mischief, if they were conscious of their superior strength ; but God has wisely ordained that they should not be so ; and having given mankind dominion over them, he has implanted in their nature an awe and dread of the human species, which occasion them to yield subjection to the lords of the creation, when they exert their authority in a proper manner.

It is really a very wonderful thing, Mrs. Wilson, to see a fine lively horse submitting to the bit and harness, or a drove of oxen quietly marching under the direction of one man.

Pray, mamma, said Harriet, what do you mean by saying that *man* is lord of *the creation*? Are *all* brute creatures subject to *every* man? I cannot comprehend how this can be.

I will endeavour to explain it to you, my dear, said Mrs. Benson, the next time we read the Bible together ; at present I have only time to inform you, that the dread of mankind, which prevails so generally amongst the inferior creatures, does not exist in so high a degree, as to render every *individual animal* afraid of every *individual man*: but the human *species*, that is to say, *all mankind together*, have an undoubted superiority and dominion ; and there is no *species* of *animals*, which, if collected together, *mankind* could not subdue: for though inferior to many of them in strength, men vastly exceed them in number, and, having the use of *reason*, can employ a variety of means to conquer them: and I make no doubt, that was the experiment possible to assemble each individual *species*, in opposition to the

whole race of mankind which exist at one time upon the earth, or even an equal number of them, the *dread* and *fear* which is instinctive in their natures would operate so powerfully on the hearts of the most ferocious of them, as to prevent their attempting any contest.

It is observable, and shews at once the goodness and wisdom of our great CREATOR, that those creatures which are the most useful to us are the easiest tamed ; and yield, not only singly, but in flocks, to mankind, nay, even to boys.

From what I have said, you must perceive that it is a great weakness for a *human being* to be *afraid* of animals.

By this time the party were advanced pretty near to the barn-yard, and Frederick espied one of the cows peeping over the gate ; on which, with a countenance expressive of fear, he ran hastily to his mamma, and asked her whether cows could toss people over gates and hedges ? What a silly question, Frederick, said she ; pray look again, and you will perceive that it is impossible for such large heavy creatures to do so ; and these inclosures are made on purpose to confine them within proper bounds. But did you not boast just now that you could ride on the horns of one of them ? That I shall not require you to do, for it would very likely make the creature angry, because cows are not accustomed to carry any load upon their heads ; neither would I allow you to run after them with a stick, or to make any attempt to frighten them ; but if you approach as a friend, I make no doubt you will be received as such ; so summon your courage and attend us ; the cows will not hurt you, I can assure you.

Neddy Wilson then began laughing, from the idea that a boy should be afraid of a cow; which made Frederick ashamed of himself; and, quitting his mamma's gown, by which he had held fast while she was speaking, he laid hold of Neddy's hand, and declared his resolution to go as near the cow as he would. I will not take upon me to say that his little heart was perfectly free from palpitation; but that lay in his own bosom, where none could discover its feelings but himself; so let us give him credit for as much courage as we can, and acknowledge him to have been a noble little fellow, in thus trusting himself amongst a number of horned cattle.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE whole party now entered the farm-yard, where they saw eight fine cows, fat, sleek, and beautifully clean, who yielded several pails of rich milk; the steam of which, added to the breath of the cows, cast a delightful fragrance around. Mrs. Wilson then entreated her company to return to the house, where tea was provided and a delicious syllabub.

The farmer now came back and refreshed himself with a cup of ale, which was very comfortable after the fatigues of the day.

I have had, said Mrs. Benson, great pleasure in viewing your farm, Mr. Wilson, which appears to me to afford all the desirable comforts and conveniences of life, and I most sincerely wish a continuance of your prosperity. If it is not an impertinent question, pray tell me, did you inherit it from your father, or was it purchased with the fruits of your own industry?

Neither my wife nor I have led an idle life, I as-

sure you, madam, replied the farmer; but, next to the blessing of heaven, I think myself in a great degree indebted to my cattle for my good success. My father left me master of a little farm, with a few acres of land well cropped, three horses, two cows, ten sheep, a sow, and pigs, a jack-ass, and a few poultry; these have gradually multiplied to what you now see me possess, besides numbers that I have sold; and I have had fine crops of hay and corn; so that every year I laid by a little money, till I was able to purchase this farm, which has proved a very good one to me.

There is something so uncommon in hearing a farmer attribute a part of his success in life to his cattle, that I should be obliged to you, Mr. Wilson, said the lady, if you would account to me for this circumstance. Most readily, madam, said he.

When I was a very young man I heard a fine sermon from the pulpit, preached by my dear wife's father, on the subject of shewing mercy to brutes, which made a great impression on my mind; and I have ever since acted towards all dumb creatures as I would to mankind, upon the principle of doing as I would be done by.

I always considered every beast that works for me as my servant, and entitled to wages; but as they cannot use money, I pay them in things of more value to them; and make it a rule, unless in case of great necessity, to let them enjoy rest on the sabbath-day.

I am very cautious of not letting any beast work beyond its strength, and always give them their food in due season; nor do I ever suffer them to be beat or cruelly used. Besides giving them what I call

their daily wages, I indulge them with all the comforts I can afford them.

In summer, when the business of the day is over, my horses enjoy themselves in a good pasture, and in winter they are sheltered from the inclemencies of the weather in a warm stable. If they get old I contrive some easy task for them, and when they can work no longer let them live on the common without it, till age and infirmities make their lives burthensome to themselves, when I have them put to as easy a death as possible.

Though my cows and sheep do not work for me, I think them entitled to a recompence for the profit I receive from their milk and wool, and endeavour to repay them with the kindest usage: and even my jack-ass finds mercy from me, for I could not bear to see so useful a creature ill-treated; and as for my dogs, I set great store by them on account of their fidelity.

These are very excellent rules indeed, Mr. Wilson, and I wish they were generally followed, said Mrs. Benson; for I believe many poor beasts suffer greatly from the ill-treatment inflicted on them; the horses in post-chaises, and hackney-coaches in London particularly. Yes, madam, said the farmer, I have heard so, and could tell you such stories of cruelties exercised on brutes in the country, as would quite shock you; and have seen in my own family such an instance of the ill effects of neglecting them, as has confirmed me in the notions I learnt from the good sermon I told you of.

I have a brother, whom I at present maintain; my father gave him an equal portion with myself, but neither he nor his wife were industrious, nor had they any

feeling for dumb creatures. He trusted his horses to careless carters, who used to let them go without water; and frequently neglect both to feed and clean them; and indeed he himself grudged them victuals; so they grew leaner and leaner, and at last they were really killed with hard work and hard living.

His cows were kept so badly in the winter, that they soon lost their milk; and the calves they had, for want of proper management, died; as did the cows themselves in a short time afterwards. The sheep got a distemper, which soon put an end to them.

His pigs being kept in the most dirty way in the world, and sometimes left without food for two days together, got hide-bound and full of vermin; and his poultry dropped off, with the roup and other disorders, till he had none left.

The jack-ass used to be put to hard drudgery in his own service, or let out to draw a sand cart: this excessive labour, with scarcely time allowed him to seek a scanty living among the thistles and hedges, soon put an end to him. These losses my brother had no means to repair; for without cattle he could not cultivate his farm, so he was soon reduced to poverty; and were I not to maintain him, he must be a beggar; for, through want of air and exercise he lost his health, and is now incapable of working. His wife died some years before of an illness, which was the consequence of indolence and inactivity.

I am much obliged to you for your story, Mr. Wilson, said Mrs. Benson, and hope my children will never forget it; for it certainly is a duty to extend our clemency to beasts and other animals. Nay, we are strictly commanded in the scriptures to

shew compassion to the beasts of others, even to those of our enemies ; surely then those which are our own property, and work for us, have a peculiar claim to it. There is one custom which shocks me very much, and that is pounding of cattle ;—I fancy, Mr. Wilson, you do not practise that much.

Madam, replied he, I should much rather pound the owners of them, through whose neglect or dishonesty it generally happens that horses trespass on other people's land. If any beast accidentally gets into my grounds, I send it home to its owner, for it certainly is no wilful fault in the creature to seek the best pasture it can find ; but if I have reason to suppose his owner turned him in, I then think myself obliged to do what the law directs in that respect : but though it is a secret I am obliged to keep from my neighbours, I may safely confess to you, madam, that I have not the heart to let a poor beast starve in a pound. As there are no courts of justice in which they can seek redress, I set up one for them in my own breast, where humanity pleads their cause.

I wish they had such an advocate in every breast, Mr. Wilson, said the lady : but my watch reminds me we must now take our leave, which I do with many thanks to you and Mrs. Wilson, for your kind entertainment and good cheer, and shall be happy to return your civilities at my own house ; and pray bring your whole family with you.

She then desired her son and daughter to prepare for their departure. Frederick was grown so intimate with little Neddy that he could scarcely be prevailed on to leave him, till he recollected Robin and the linnet.

As they returned in the coach, Mrs. Benson remarked, that farmer Wilson's story was enough to make every one who heard it careful of their live stock, for their own sakes: but, said she, the pleasure and advantage will be greatly increased if it is done from a principle of humanity as well as interest. Miss Benson answered that she hoped she should neither treat animals ill, nor place her affections on them too strongly. That, my dear, replied her good mamma, is the proper medium to be observed.—The speech you made for the ant, mamma, said Harriet, has scarcely ever been out of my head since: I should like to hear what you could say for every live creature we see.—I had need have strong lungs, my dear, to perform such a task as that, replied Mrs. Benson. I shall, on all proper occasions, be ready to lend my tongue to the dumb, and to speak for those who cannot utter their own sorrows and injuries.

In a short time they arrived at home. The maid, to whose care the birds had been entrusted, gave a good account of her charge; and Miss Harriet and Master Frederick went to bed in peace, after a day spent with so much pleasure and improvement.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE next morning the Redbreasts attended as usual, and Robin was still better, but his father began to fear he would never perfectly recover from his accident: however, he kept his apprehensions to himself, and suffered the little ones to entertain their lame brother with a relation of what they had seen the day before in the orchard. Frederick and Harriet were so diverted with the chattering and

chirping of the little things, that they did not miss the parent's song.

When the young ones had stayed as long as she thought right, the hen Redbreast summoned them away, and all took leave of Robin, who longed to go with them, but was not able. The father reminded him that he had great reason to rejoice in his present situation, considering all things; on which he resumed his cheerfulness, and giving a sprightly twitter, hopped into Master Frederick's hand, which was spread open to receive him. The rest then flew away, and Miss Harriet and her brother prepared for their morning tasks.

The Redbreasts alighted as usual, to drink in the court yard, and were preparing to return to the orchard, when Flapsy expressed a desire to look a little about the world; for she said it would be very mopish to be always confined to the orchard; and Dicky seconded her request. Pecksy replied, that however her curiosity might be excited, she had known so much happiness in the nest, that she was strongly attached to the paternal spot, and could gladly pass her life there. The parents both commended her contented disposition; but her father said, that as there was nothing blameable in the inclination Dicky and Flapsy discovered for seeing the world, provided it was kept within due bounds, he would readily gratify it: then asking if they were sufficiently refreshed, he took wing, and led the way to a neighbouring grove, where he placed his little tribe amongst the branches of a venerable oak.

Here their ears were charmed with a most enchanting concert of music. On one tree a black-

bird and a thrush poured forth their strong melodious notes ; on another a number of linnets joined their sweet voices ; exalted in the air a sky-lark modulated his delightful pipe ; whilst a brother of the wood, seated on a cool refreshing turf, made the grove re-echo with his melody ; to these the nightingale joined his enchanting lay. In short, not a note was wanting to complete the harmony.

The little Redbreasts were so exceedingly charmed, that for a while they continued listening with silent rapture ; at length Dicky exclaimed, How happy should I be to join the cheerful band, and live for ever in this charming place !

It is, replied his mother, a very pleasant situation to be sure ; but could you be sensible of the superior advantages, which, as a Redbreast, you may enjoy by taking up your abode in the orchard, you would never wish to change it ; for my own part, I find myself so happy in that calm retreat, that nothing but necessity shall ever drive me from it.

Pecksy declared that though she was much delighted with the novelty of the scene, and charmed with the music, she now felt an ardent desire to return home, but Flapsy wished to see a little more first. Well, said the father, your desires shall be gratified ; let us take a circuit in this grove, for I wish you to see every thing worth observation in every place you go to ; and not to fly about the world, as many giddy birds do, without the least improvement from their travels. On this he spread his wings as the signal of departure, which his family obeyed.

Observing a parcel of boys creeping silently along. Stop, said he, let us perch on this tree and see what

these little monsters are about. Scarcely were they seated, when one of the boys mounted an adjacent tree, and took a nest of half-fledged linnets, which he brought in triumph to his companions.

At this instant a family of thrushes unfortunately chirped, which directed another boy to the place of their habitation; on which he climbed, and eagerly seized the unfortunate little creatures. Having met with so much success, they left the grove to exult, at their own homes, over their wretched captives, forever separated from their tender parents; who soon came back laden with the gain of their labour, which they had kindly destined for the sustenance of their infant broods.

The little Redbreasts were now spectators of those parental agonies which had been formerly described to them; and Pecksy cried out, Who would desire to live in this grove, after having experienced the comforts of the orchard? Dicky and Flapsy were desirous to depart, being alarmed for their own safety. No, said the father, let us stay a little longer—now we will go on.

They accordingly took another flight, and saw a man scattering seed upon the ground. See there, said Dicky, what fine food that man throws down; I dare say he is some good creature who is a friend to the feathered race; shall we alight and partake of his bounty?

Do not form too hasty an opinion, Dicky, said the father; watch here with me a little while, and then do as you think proper. All the little ones stretched their necks and kept a curious eye fixed on the man. In a few minutes a number of sparrows, chaffinches, and linnets descended, and began to regale them-

selves ; but, in the midst of their feast, a net was suddenly cast over them, and they were all taken captive. The man, who was a bird catcher by profession, called to his assistant, who brought a cage, divided into a number of small partitions, in which the linnets and chaffinches were separately deposited. In this dismal prison, where they had scarcely room to flutter, were those little creatures confined, who lately poured forth their songs of joy, fearless of danger. As for the sparrows, their necks were wrung, and they were put in a bag together. The little Redbreasts trembled for themselves, and were in great haste to take wing. Stay, said the father, Dicky has not yet made acquaintance with this friend of the feathered race. No, said Dicky, nor do I desire it ; defend me and all who are dear to me from such friends as these ? Well, said the father, learn from this instance never to form an hasty judgment, nor to put yourself into the power of strangers, who offer you favours you have no right to expect from their hands.

Indeed, my love, said the mother bird, I am very anxious to get home ; I have not lately been used to be long absent from it, and every excursion I make endears it to me. O, the day is not half spent, replied her mate ; and I hope that, for the gratification of the little ones, you will consent to complete the ramble. Come, let us visit another part of the grove ; I am acquainted with its inmost recesses. His mate acquiesced, and they proceeded on their journey.

At length the father hastily called out, Turn this way ! turn this way ! The whole party obeyed the word of command, and found the good effects of

their obedience; for, in an instant, they saw a flash of fire; a thick smoke followed it, and immediately they heard a dreadful sound, and saw a young redstart fall bleeding to the ground, on which he struggled just long enough to cry, Oh! my dear father, why did I not listen to your kind admonitions, which I now find, too late, were the dictates of tenderness! and then expired.

The little Redbreasts were struck with consternation at this dreadful accident; and Pecksy, who recovered the soonest, begged her father would inform her by what means the redstart was killed. He was shot to death, said he: and had you not followed my directions, it might have been the fate of every one of you; therefore let it be a lesson to you to follow every injunction of your parents with the same readiness for the future.

You may depend on it, our experience teaches us to foresee many dangers which such young creatures as you have no notion of; and when we desire you to do, or to forbear any thing, it is for the sake of your safety or advantage: therefore, Dicky, never more stand, as you sometimes have done, asking *why* we tell you to do so and so? for had that been the case now, you, who were in a direct line with the gunner, would have been inevitably shot.

They all said they would observe implicit obedience. Do so, said he; but in order to this, you must also remember to practise, in our absence, what we enjoin you when present. For instance, some kinds of food are very prejudicial to your health, which we would not, on any account, let you taste when we are by: these you must not indulge in when away from us, whatever any other bird may say in re-

commendation of them. Neither must you engage in any dangerous enterprise, which others, who have natural strength, or acquired agility, go through with safety ; nor should you go to any places which we have pointed out as dangerous, nor join any companions which we have forbid you to make acquaintance with.

This poor redstart might have avoided his fate : for I heard his father, when I was last in the grove, advise him not to fly about by himself till he had shewn him the dangers of the world.

Pecksy answered that she knew the value of parental instruction so well that she should certainly treasure up in her heart every maxim of it ; and the others promised to do the same : but, said Flapsy, I cannot understand the nature of the accident which occasioned the death of the redstart.

Neither can I explain it to you, my dear, replied the father ; I only know that it is a very common practice with some men to carry instruments, from which they discharge what proves fatal to many a bird ; but I have, by attentive observation, learnt how to evade the mischief.—Whenever I go from the orchard I always get upon a high tree, and look all around me : if I see any gunners, I take a different course (the thickness of the underwood prevented my discovering him who shot the redstart). I also carefully avoid associating with those birds which do mischief to the property of mankind ; for those that join with thieves and ravagers deserve, and must justly expect, to share their fate : let me therefore advise you to be particularly careful to keep proper company, and gain an honest character, as it will ensure you the good opinion of others.

But come, let us descend and refresh ourselves a little, as we may do it with safety ; and then we will see if we cannot find a place where you can have amusement, without being exposed to such dangers as attend the inhabitants of woods and groves.

Are you sufficiently rested to take a pretty long flight ? O yes, cried Dicky, who was quite eager to leave the spot, in which, a short time before, he had longed to pass his life ; the rest joined in the same wish, and every wing was instantly expanded.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE father led the way, and in a very short space of time he and his family arrived at the estate of a gentleman, who, having a plentiful fortune, endeavoured to collect all that was curious in art and nature, for the amusement of his own mind and the gratification of others. He had a house like a palace, furnished with every expensive rarity ; his gardens, to which the Redbreasts took their flight, were laid out in such a manner as to afford the most delightful variety to the eye.

Amongst other articles of taste were an aviary and a menagerie. The former was built like a temple, enclosed with brass wire ; the frame-work was painted green, and ornamented with carving gilt : in the middle a fountain continually threw up fresh water, which fell into a basin whose brink was enamelled with flowers ; at one end were partitions for birds' nests, and troughs containing various kinds of seed and materials for building nests : this part was carefully sheltered from every inclemency of the weather, and numbers of perches were placed in different parts of the aviary, and it was surrounded by a most beautiful shrubbery.

A habitation like this, in which all the conveniences of life seemed to be collected, where abundance was supplied without toil, where each gay songster might sing himself to repose in the midst of ease and plenty, safe from the dangers of the woods, appeared to our young travellers desirable beyond all the situations in the world; and Dicky expressed an earnest wish to be admitted into it. Well, said the father, let us not determine hastily; it will be advisable first to inquire whether its inhabitants are really happy, before you make interest to become one of the number; place yourselves by me on this shrub, and whilst we rest ourselves, we shall have an opportunity of seeing what passes.

The first bird that attracted their notice was a dove, who sat cooing by himself in a corner, in accents so gentle and sweet, that a stranger to his language would have listened to them with delight; but the Redbreasts, who understood their import, heard them with sympathetic concern.

Oh, my dear, my beloved mate, said he, am I then divided from you for ever? What avails it that I am furnished here with all the elegancies and luxuries of life? Deprived of your company I have no enjoyment of them; the humblest morsel, though gained with toil and danger, would be infinitely preferable to me if shared with you. Here am I shut up for the remainder of my days, in society for which I have no relish, whilst she, who has hitherto been the beloved partner of all my joys, is for ever separated from me! In vain will you, with painful wing, pursue your anxious search in quest of me; never, never more, shall I bring you the welcome refreshment; never shall I hear your soothing voice and delight in the soft murmurs of the infant pair, which you hatched

with such care, and nursed with such tenderness ! No, my beloved nestlings, never will your wretched father be at liberty to guide your flight, and instruct you in your duty. Here his voice faltered ; and overcome with bitter reflections, he resigned himself a prey to silent sorrow.

This dove is not happy, however, said the hen Redbreast to her mate, and no wonder : but let us attend to the notes of that lark. His eyes were turned up towards the sky, he fluttered his wings, he strained his throat, and would, to a human eye, have appeared in raptures of joy ; but the Redbreasts perceived that he was inflamed with rage. And am I to be constantly confined in this horrid place ? sang he. Is my upward flight to be impeded by bars and wires ? Must I no longer soar towards that bright luminary, and make the arch of heaven resound with my singing ? Shall I cease to be the herald of the morn, or must I be so in this contracted sphere ? No, ye partners of my captivity, henceforth sleep on and take ignoble rest ; and may you lose in slumber the remembrance of past pleasures ! O cruel and unjust man ! was it not enough that I proclaimed the approach of day, that I soothed your sultry hours, that I heightened the delight of evening, but must I, to gratify your unfeeling wantonness, be secluded from ever joy my heart holds dear, and condemned to a situation I detest ? Take your delicious dainties, reserve your flowing stream for those who can relish them, but give me liberty ! But why do I address myself to you who are heedless of my misery ? Here, casting an indignant look around, he stopt his song.

What think you now, Dicky, said the Redbreast, have you as high an idea of the happiness of this

place as you conceived at the first view of it? I cannot help thinking still, replied Dicky, that it is a charming retreat, and that it may be very comfortable to have every thing provided for one's use. Well, said the father, let us move, and observe those linnets who are building their nest. Accordingly they flew to a tree, the branches of which formed a part of the shelter of the aviary, where they easily heard without being themselves observed, all that passed in it.

Come, said one of the linnets, let us go on with our work, and finish the nest, though it will be rather a melancholy task to hatch a set of little prisoners. How different was the case when we could anticipate the pleasure of rearing a family to all the joys of liberty! Men, it is true, now, with officious care, supply us with the necessary materials, and we make a very good nest; but I protest I had much rather be at the trouble of seeking them.

What pleasures have we experienced in picking a bit of wool from a sheep's back, in searching for moss, in selecting the best feather where numbers were left to our choice; in stopping to rest on the top of a tree which commanded an extensive prospect; in joining a choir of songsters whom we accidentally met! But now our days pass with repeated sameness; variety, so necessary to give a relish to all enjoyment, is wanting. Instead of the songs of joy we formerly heard from every spray, our ears are constantly annoyed with the sound of mournful lamentations, transports of rage, or murmurs of discontent. Could we reconcile ourselves to the loss of liberty, it is impossible to be happy here, unless we could harden our hearts to every sympathetic feeling.

True, said his mate; yet I am resolved to try what

patience, resignation, and employment will effect; and hope, as our young ones will never know what liberty is, they will not pine as we do for it. Saying this she picked up a straw, her mate followed the example, and they pursued their work.

At this instant a hen goldfinch brought forth her brood, who were full fledged. Come, said she, my nestlings, use your wings; I have taught you to fly in all directions. So saying, the little ones divided; one flew upwards; but, emulous to outdo a little sparrow which was flying in the air above the aviary, he hit himself against the wires of the dome, and would have fallen to the bottom but that he was stopped by one of the perches.

As soon as he recovered, Why cannot I soar as I see other birds do? said he. Alas! cried the mother, we are in a place of confinement; we are shut up, and can never get out; but here is food in abundance, and every other necessary.—Never get out! exclaimed the whole brood; then adieu to happiness! She attempted to soothe them, but in vain.

The little Redbreasts rejoiced in their liberty; and Dicky gave up the desire of living in the aviary, and wished to be gone. Stop, said the father, let us first hear what those Canaries are saying.

The Canaries had almost completed their nest. How fortunate is our lot, said the hen bird, in being placed in this aviary! How preferable is it to the small cage we dwelt in last year! Yes, replied her mate: yet how comfortable was that in comparison with the still smaller ones in which we were once separately confined. For my part, I have no wish to fly abroad, for I should neither know what to do nor where to go; and it shall be my endeavour to

inspire my young ones with the same sentiments I feel. Indeed we owe the highest gratitude to those who make such kind provisions for a set of foreigners, who have no resources but their bounty ; and my best lays shall be devoted to them. Nothing is wanted to complete the happiness of this place but to have other kinds of birds excluded. Poor creatures ! it must be very mortifying to them to be shut up here, and see others of their kind enjoying full freedom. No wonder they are perpetually quarrelling ; for my part, I sincerely pity them, and am ready to submit, from a principle of compassion, to the occasional insults and affronts I meet with.

You now perceive, Dicky, said the cock Red-breast, that this place is not, as you supposed, the region of perfect happiness ; you may also observe that it is not the abode of universal wretchedness.

It is by no means desirable to be shut up for life, let the place of confinement be ever so splendid ; but should it at any time be your lot to be caught and imprisoned, which may possibly be the case, adopt the sentiments of the Linnet and the Canary bird : employment will pass away many an hour that will be a heavy load if spent in grief and anxiety : and reflections on the blessings and comforts that are still in your power, will lessen your regret for those which are lost. But come, pick up some of the seeds which are scattered on the outside of the aviary, for that is no robbery, and then I will shew you another scene.

As soon as they had regaled themselves with the superfluities of the feathered captives, they took their flight to a different part of the garden, in which was a menagery.

The menagery consisted of a number of pens,

built round a grass plat : in each was a pan of water, a sort of box containing a bed or nest, a trough for food, and a perch. In every pen was confined a pair of birds, and every pair was either of a different species, or distinguished for some beautiful variety either of form or plumage. The wooden bars which were put in the front were painted partly green and partly white, which dazzled the sight at the first glance, and so attracted the eyes, that there was no seeing what was behind without going close up to the pens.

The little Redbreasts knew not what sight to expect, and begged their parents to gratify their curiosity. Well, follow me, said the father ; but I believe you must alight on the cross bars, or you will not be able to examine the beauties of these fowls. They did so, and in the first pen was a pair of partridges.

The size of these birds so greatly exceeding their own, astonished them all ; but notwithstanding this, the amiable Pecksy was quite interested with their modest gentle appearance, and said, she thought no one could ever wish to injure them.

True, Pecksy, replied the father, they have, from the harmlessness of their disposition, a natural claim to tenderness and compassion ; and yet I believe there are few birds who meet with less : for I have observed, that numbers share the same fate as the redstart which you saw die in the grove. I have myself seen many put to death in that manner.

For a long time I was excessively puzzled to account for this fatality, and resolved, if possible, to gratify my curiosity. At length I saw a man kill two, and take them away. This very man had shewn me great kindness, in feeding me when I first left my

father's nest; so I had no apprehension of his doing me an injury, and resolved to follow him.

When he arrived at his own house I saw him deliver the victims of his cruelty to another person, who hung them up together by the legs, in a place which had a variety of other dead things in it, the sight of which shocked me exceedingly, and I could stay no longer. I therefore flew back to the field in which I had seen the murder committed: and, in searching about, found the nest belonging to the poor creatures, in which were several young ones, just hatched, that in a short time were starved to death! How dreadful is the fate of young animals that lose their parents before they are able to shift for themselves! and how dutiful ought those to be to whom the blessings of parental instruction and assistance is continued!

When the next morning arrived I went again to see after the dead partridges, and found them hanging as before; and this was the case the day after; but the following morning I saw a boy stripping all their feathers off. As soon as he had completed this horrid operation, a woman took them whom I ventured to follow, as the window of the place she entered stood open; where, to my astonishment, I beheld her twist their wings about, and fasten them to their sides, then cross their legs upon their breasts, and run something quite through their bodies. After this she put them before a place which glowed with a brightness something resembling the setting sun, which, on the woman's retiring, I approached, and found intolerably hot: I therefore made a hasty retreat: but, resolving to know the end of the partridges, I kept hovering about the

house ; and at last, looking in at the window, I saw them, smoking hot, set before the man who murdered them, who was accompanied by several others ; all of whom eyed them with as much delight as I have seen any of you discover at the sight of the finest worm or insect that could be procured. In an instant after this the poor partridges were divided limb from limb, and each one of the party present had his share till every bone was picked.

There were some other things devoured in the same manner ; from which I learnt, that men feed on birds and other animals, as we do on those little creatures which are destined for our sustenance, only they do not eat them alive. Pray, father, said Dicky, do they eat Redbreasts ? I believe not, said he ; but I have reason to suppose they make many a meal on sparrows, for I have beheld vast numbers of them killed.

At this instant their attention was attracted by one of the partridges in the pen, which thus addressed his mate,

Well, my love, as there is no chance of our being set at liberty, I think we may as well prepare our nest, that you may deposit your eggs in it. The employment of hatching and raising your little ones will, at least, mitigate the wearisomeness of confinement, and I promise myself many happy days : for, as we are so well fed and attended, I think we may form hopes that our offspring will also be provided for ; and, though they will not be at liberty to range about as we formerly did, they will avoid many of those terrors and anxieties to which our race are frequently exposed at one season of the year in particular.

I am very ready to follow your advice, said the hen partridge, and the business will soon be completed, for the nest is in a manner made for us, it only wants a little adjusting: I will therefore set about it immediately, and will no longer waste my hours in fruitless lamentations, since I am convinced that *content* will render every situation easy in which we can enjoy the company of our dearest friends, and obtain the necessaries of life. So saying, she retired into the place provided for the purpose on which she was now intent, and her mate followed, in order to lend her all the assistance in his power.

I am very glad, said the hen Redbreast, that my young ones have had the opportunity of seeing such an example as this. You now understand what benefit it is of to have a temper of resignation; more than half the evils of life, I am well convinced, arise from fretfulness and discontent: and would every one, like these partridges, try to make the best of their condition, we should seldom hear complaints; for there are much fewer *real* than *imaginary* misfortunes. But come, let us take a peep into the next pen.

Here they beheld a pair of fine pheasants, who were quietly picking up some grain that was scattered for them; from which might be inferred, that they had, like the partridges, reconciled themselves to their lot. The little Redbreasts were much pleased with the beauty of the cock-bird; but as there was no conversation to be heard here, their parents desired them to fly on; as pleasures, by which the eye only was amused, were not deserving of long attention.

They accordingly hopped to the next partition, in

which were confined a pair of penciled pheasants. Flapsy was quite delighted with the elegance of their form and the beauty of their plumage, and could have staid the whole day looking at them; but as these birds were also tame and contented, nothing more could be learnt here than a confirmation of what the partridges had taught. Our travellers therefore proceeded still farther, and found a pair of gold pheasants. Their splendid appearance struck the young Redbreasts with astonishment; and raised such sentiments of respect, that they were even fearful of approaching birds which they esteemed as so much superior to themselves; but their father desiring they would never form a judgment of birds from a glittering outside, placed his family where they had an opportunity of observing that this splendid pair had but little intrinsic merit.

They were proud of their fine plumage, and their chief employment was walking backwards and forwards to display it; and sometimes they endeavoured to push through the bars of their prison, that they might get abroad to shew their rich plumage to the world, and exult over those who were, in this respect, inferior to them. How hard, said one of them, it is to be shut up here, where there are no other birds to admire us, and where we have no little ugly creatures to ridicule.

If such are your desires, said the hen Redbreast, I am sure you are happier here than at liberty; for you would, by your proud affected airs, excite the contempt of every bird which has right sentiments, and consequently meet with continued mortification, to which even the ugliest might contribute.

Pecksy desired to know if all fine birds were proud

and affected? By no means, replied her mother; you observed the other two pair of pheasants, who were, in my opinion, nearly equal to these for beauty and elegance. How easy and unassuming were they, and how much were their charms improved by the graces of humility! I often wonder that any bird should indulge himself in pride. What have such little creatures as we to boast of? The largest species amongst us is very inferior to many animals we see in the world; and man is lord over the greatest and strongest even of these. Nay, man himself has no cause to be *proud*; for he is subject to death as well as the meanest of creatures, as I have had opportunities of observing. But come, the day wears away, let us view the other parts of this enclosure.

On this the father conducted his family to a variety of pens, in which were different sorts of foreign birds, of whom he could give but little account; and would not suffer his young ones to stand gazing at them long, lest they should imbibe injurious notions of them; especially when he heard Dicky cry out, as he left the pen, I dare say that bird is a very cruel voracious creature; I make no doubt but he would eat us all one after the other if he could get at us.

Take care, Dicky, said the father, how you form an ill opinion of any one on slight grounds. You cannot possibly tell what the character of this Stork is merely from his appearance; you are a stranger to his language, and cannot see the disposition of his heart. If you give way to a suspicious temper, your own little breast will be in a state of constant perturbation; you will absolutely exclude yourself from the blessings of society, and will be shunned and despised by every bird of every kind. This Stork, which

you thus censure, is far from deserving your ill opinion. He would do you no harm, and is remarkable for his filial affection.

I saw him taken prisoner. He was carrying his aged father on his back, whom he had for a long time fed and comforted : the weight of this precious burden impeded his flight ; and, being at length weary with it, he descended to the ground to rest himself, when a cruel man, who was out on the business of bird catching threw a net over them, and then seized him by the neck. His poor father, who was before worn out with age and infirmities, unable to bear his calamity, fell from his back, and instantly expired. The Stork, after casting a look of anguish on his dear parent, which I shall never forget, turned with fury on his persecutor, whom he beat with his wings with all the strength he had ; but it was in vain to contend with a being so much more powerful than himself ; and, in spite of all his exertions, he was conveyed to this place.

But come, let us pick up a little refreshment, and then return to the orchard. Saying this, he alighted on the ground, as did his mate and her family, where they met with a plentiful repast in the provisions which had been accidentally scattered by the person whose employment it was to bring food for the inhabitants of the menagery. When they had sufficiently regaled themselves, all parties gladly returned to the nest, and every heart rejoiced in the possession of liberty and peace.

CHAPTER XXV.

FOR three successive days nothing remarkable happened either at Mr. Benson's, or the Redbreasts'

nest. The little family came to the breakfast table, and Robin recovered from his accident, though not sufficiently to fly well; but Dicky, Flapsy, and Pecksy, continued so healthy, and improved so fast, that they required no further care: and the third morning after their tour to the grove, &c. they did not commit the least error. When they retired from the parlour into the court-yard, to which Robin accompanied them, the father expressed great delight that they were at length able to shift for themselves.

And now a wonderful change took place in his own heart. That ardent affection for his young, which had hitherto made him, for their sakes, patient of toil, and fearless of danger, was on a sudden quenched: but from the goodness of his disposition, he still felt a kind solicitude for their future welfare; and calling them around him, he thus addressed them:

You must be sensible, my dear young ones, that, from the time you left the egg-shell till the present instant, both your mother and I have nourished you with the tenderest love. We have taught you all the arts of life which are necessary to procure your subsistence, and preserve you from danger. We have shewn you a variety of characters in the different classes of birds, and pointed out those which are to be shunned. You must now shift for yourselves: but, before we part, let me repeat my admonition, to use industry, avoid contention, cultivate peace, and be contented with your condition. Let none of your own species excel you in any amiable quality, for want of your endeavours to equal the best; and do your duty in every relation of life, as we have done ours by you. To the gay scenes of levity and diasi-

pation prefer a calm retirement, for there is the greatest degree of happiness to be found. You, Robin, I would advise, on account of your infirmity, to attach yourself to the family where you have been so kindly cherished.

Whilst he thus spake, his mate stood by; who, finding the same change beginning to take place in her own breast, she viewed her young ones with tender regret: and, when he ceased, cried out, Adieu, ye dear objects of my late cares and solicitude! may ye never more stand in need of a mother's assistance! Though nature now dismisses me from the arduous task which I have long daily performed, I rejoice not, but would gladly continue my toil, for the sake of its attendant pleasures. O! delightful sentiments of maternal love, how can I part with you? Let me, my nestlings, give you a last embrace. Then, spreading her wings, she folded them successively to her bosom, and instantly recovered her tranquillity.

Each young one expressed his grateful thanks to both father and mother, and with these acknowledgments filial affection expired in their breasts; instead of which a respectful friendship succeeded. Thus was that tender tie dissolved, which had hitherto bound this little family together; for the parents had performed their duty, and the young ones had no need of further assistance.

The old Redbreasts, having now only themselves to provide for, resolved to be no longer burthensome to their benefactors; and, after pouring forth their gratitude in the most lively strains, they took their flight together, resolving never to separate. Every care now vanished, and their little hearts felt no

sentiments but those of cheerfulness and joy. They ranged the fields and gardens, sipped at the coolest springs, and indulged themselves in the pleasures of society, joining their cheerful notes with those of other gay choristers, which animate and heighten the delightful scenes of mortal life.

The first morning that the old Redbreasts were missing from Mrs. Benson's breakfast table, Frederick and his sister were greatly alarmed for their safety; but their mamma said she was of opinion that they had left their nestlings; as it was the nature of animals in general to dismiss their young as soon as they were able to provide for themselves. That is very strange, replied Miss Harriet: I wonder what would become of my brother and me, were you and papa to serve us so!

And is a boy of six, or a girl of eleven years old capable of shifting for themselves? said her mamma. No, my dear child, you have need of a much longer continuance of your parents' care than birds and other animals: and therefore God has ordained that parental affection, when once awakened, should always remain in the human breast, unless extinguished by the undutiful behaviour of a child.

And shall we see the old Redbreasts no more? cried Frederick. I do not know that you will, replied Mrs. Benson, though it is not unlikely that they may visit us again in the winter; but let not their absence grieve you, my love, for I dare say they are safe and happy.

At that instant the young ones arrived, and met with a very joyful reception. The amusement they afforded to Master Benson reconciled him to the loss of their parents; but Harriet declared she

could not help being sorry that they were gone. I shall, for the future, mamma, said she, take great notice of animals; for I have had much entertainment in observing the ways of these Robins. I highly approve your resolution, my dear, said Mrs. Benson, and hope the occasional instruction I have at different times given you has furnished you with general ideas respecting the proper treatment of animals. I will now inform you upon what principles the rules of conduct I prescribe to myself on this subject are founded.

I consider that the same almighty and good God, who created mankind, made all other living creatures likewise; and appointed them their different ranks in the creation, that they might form together a community, receiving and conferring reciprocal benefits.

There is no doubt but that the Almighty designed all beings for happiness, proportionable to the faculties he has endued them with; and whoever wantonly destroys that happiness acts contrary to the will of his Maker.

The world we live in seems to have been principally designed for the use and comfort of mankind, who, by the divine appointment, have dominion over the inferior creatures; in the exercise of which it is certainly their duty to imitate the *supreme Lord of the Universe*, by being merciful to the utmost of their power. They are endued with reason, which enables them to discover the different nature of brutes, the faculties they possess, and how they may be made serviceable in the world; and as beasts cannot apply these faculties to their own use in so extensive a way, and numbers of them being unable

to provide for their own sustenance, are indebted to men for many of the necessities of life, men have an undoubted right to their labour in return.

Several other kinds of animals, which are sustained at the expence of mankind, cannot labour for them; from such they have a natural claim to whatever they can supply towards the food and raiment of their benefactors; and therefore, when we take the wool and milk of the flocks and herds, we take no more than our due, and what they can very well spare: as they seem to have an over-abundance given them, that they may be able to return their obligations to us.

Some creatures have nothing to give us but their own bodies: these have been expressly destined, by the *supreme Governor*, as food for mankind, and he has appointed an extraordinary increase of them for this very purpose; such an increase as would be very injurious to us if all were suffered to live. These we have an undoubted right to kill; but should make their short-lives as comfortable as possible.

Other creatures seem to be of no particular use to mankind, but as they serve to furnish our minds with contemplations, on the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and to exhilarate our spirits by their cheerfulness, they should not be wantonly killed, nor treated with the least degree of cruelty, but should be at full liberty to enjoy the blessings assigned them; unless they abound to such a degree as to become injurious, by devouring the food which is designed for man, or for animals more immediately beneficial to him, whom it is his duty to protect,

Some animals, such as wild beasts, serpents, &c. are in their natures ferocious, noxious, or venomous, and capable of injuring the health, or even of destroying the lives of men, and other creatures of a higher rank than themselves: these, if they leave the secret abodes which are allotted them, and become offensive, certainly may with justice be killed.

In a word, my dear, we should endeavour to regulate our regards according to the utility and necessities of every living creature with which we are any ways connected; and consequently should prefer the happiness of *mankind* to that of any *animal* whatever. Next to these (who, being partakers of the same nature with ourselves, are more properly our *fellow creatures*) we should consider our cattle and domestic animals, and take care to supply every creature that is dependent on us with proper food, and keep it in its proper place: after their wants are supplied, we should extend our benevolence and compassion as far as possible to the inferior rank of beings; and, if nothing further is in our power, should at least refrain from exercising cruelties on them. For my own part, I never willingly put to death, or cause to be put to death, any creature, but when there is a real necessity for it; and have my food dressed in a plain manner, that no more lives may be sacrificed for me than nature requires for my subsistence in that way which God has allotted me. But I fear I have tired you with my long lecture, so will now dismiss you.

While Mrs. Benson was giving these instructions to her daughter, Frederick diverted himself with the young Robins, who, having no kind parents now to admonish them, made a longer visit than usual: so

that Mrs. Benson would have been obliged to drive them away, had not Pecksy, on seeing her move from her seat, recollected that she and her brother and sister had been guilty of an impropriety; she therefore reminded them that they should no longer intrude, and led the way out at the window; the others followed her, and Mrs. Benson gave permission to her children to take their morning's walk before they began their lessons.

CHAPTER XXVI.

As the old Robins, who were the hero and heroine of my tale, are made happy, it is time for me to put an end to it: but my young readers will doubtless wish to know the sequel of the history; I shall therefore inform them of it in as few words as possible.

Miss Harriet followed her mamma's precepts and examples, and grew up an *universal benefactress* to all people, and all creatures, with whom she was any ways connected.

Frederick was educated upon the same plan, and was never known to be cruel to animals, or to treat them with an improper degree of fondness: he was also remarkable for his benevolence, so as to deserve and obtain the character of a GOOD MAN.

Miss Lucy Jenkins was quite reformed by Mrs. Benson's lecture, and her friend's example; but her brother continued his practice of exercising barbarities on a variety of unfortunate animals, till he went to school; where, having no opportunity of doing so, he gratified his malignant disposition on his school-fellows, and made it his diversion to pull their hair,

and pinch and tease the younger boys; and, by the time he became a man, had so hardened his heart, that no kind of distress affected him, nor did he care for any person but himself; consequently he was despised by all with whom he had any intercourse. In this manner he lived for some years: at length, as he was inhumanly beating and spurring a fine horse, merely because it did not go a faster pace than it was able to do, the poor creature, in its efforts to evade his blows, threw his barbarous rider, who was killed on the spot.

Farmer Wilson's prosperity increased with every succeeding year; and he acquired a plentiful fortune, with which he gave portions to each of his children, as opportunities offered for settling them in the world: and he and his wife lived to a good old age, beloved and respected by all who knew them.

Mrs. Addis lost her parrot by the disorder with which it was attacked while Mrs. Benson was visiting at the house; and before she had recovered the shock of this *misfortune*, as she called it, her grief was renewed by the death of an old lap-dog. About a year afterwards her monkey escaped to the top of the house, from whence he fell and broke his neck. The favourite cat went mad, and was obliged to be killed. In short, by a series of calamities, all her *dear darlings* were successively destroyed. She supplied their places with new favourites, which gave her a deal of fatigue and trouble.

In the mean while her children grew up; and, having experienced no tenderness from her, they scarcely knew they had a mamma; nor did those who had the care of their education inculcate that *her want of affection did not cancel their duty*; they therefore treated her with the utmost neglect, and she had

no friend left. In her old age, when she was no longer capable of amusing herself with cats, dogs, parrots, and monxies, she became sensible of her errors, and wished for the comforts which other parents enjoyed ; but it was now too late, and she ended her days in sorrow and regret.

This unfortunate lady had tenderness enough in her disposition for all the purposes of humanity ; and, had she placed it on proper objects, agreeably to Mrs. Benson's rule, she might have been, like her, a good wife, mother, friend, and mistress, consequently respectable and happy. But, when a child, Mrs. Addis was (under an idea of making her *tender hearted*) permitted to lavish *immoderate fondness* on animals, the care of which engrossed her whole attention, and greatly interrupted her education ; so that, instead of studying natural history, and other useful things, her time was taken up with pampering and attending upon animals, which she considered as the most important business in life.

Her children fell into faults of a different nature. Miss Addis being, as I observed in a former part of this history, left to the care of servants, grew up with very contracted notions. Amongst other prejudices, she imbibed that of being afraid of spiders, frogs, and other harmless things ; and, having been bitten by the monkey when it escaped, as I before related, and terrified by the cat when it went mad, she extended her fears to every kind of creature, and could not take a walk in the fields, or even in the street, without a thousand apprehensions. And at last her constitution, which, from bad nursing, had become very delicate, was still more weakened by her continual apprehensions ; and a rat happening to run across the path, as she was walking, she fell into fits,

which afflicted her, at intervals, during the remainder of her life.

Master Addis, as soon as he became sensible of his mother's foible, conceived an inveterate hatred to animals in general, which he regarded as his enemies; and thought he was avenging his own cause when he treated any with barbarity. Cats and dogs, in particular, he singled out as the objects of his revenge, because he considered them as his mother's greatest favourites; and many a one fell an innocent victim to his mistaken ideas.

The parent Redbreasts visited their kind benefactors the next winter; but, as they were flying along one day, they saw some crumbs of bread, which had been scattered by Miss Lucy Jenkins, who (as I observed before) had adopted the sentiments of her friend, in respect to compassion to animals, and resolved to imitate her in every excellence. The Redbreasts gratefully picked up the crumbs, and encouraged by the gentle invitation of her looks, determined to repeat their visits; which they accordingly did, and found such an ample supply, that they thought it more advisable to go to her with their next brood, than to be burthensome to their old benefactors, who had a great number of pensioners to support: but Master and Miss Benson had frequently the pleasure of seeing them, and knew them from all their species by several particularities, which so long an acquaintance had given them the opportunity of observing.

Robin, in pursuance of his father's advice, and agreeably to his own inclinations, attached himself to Mr. Benson's family, where he was an exceeding great favourite. He had before, under the conduct of his parents, made frequent excursions into the

garden, and was, by their direction, enabled to get up into trees, but his wing never recovered sufficiently to enable him to take long flights; however, he found himself at liberty to do as he pleased; and, during the summer months, he commonly passed most of his time abroad, and roosted in trees, but visited the tea-table every morning; and there he usually met his sister Pecksy, who took up her abode in the orchard, where she enjoyed the friendship of her father and mother. Dicky and Flapsy, who thought their company too grave flew giddily about together. In a short time they were both caught in a trap-cage, and put into the aviary, which Dicky once longed to inhabit. Here they were at first very miserable; but, after a while, recollecting their good parents' advice, and the example of the linnets and pheasants, they at length reconciled themselves to their lot, and each met with a mate with whom they lived tolerably happy.

From the foregoing examples, I hope my young readers will select the best for their own imitation, and take warning by the rest, otherwise my *Fabulous Histories* have been written in vain.

Happy would it be for the animal creation, if every human being, like good Mrs. Benson, consulted the welfare of inferior creatures, and neither spoiled them by indulgence, nor injured them by tyranny! Happy would mankind be, if every one, like her, acted in conformity to the will of their Maker; by cultivating in their own minds, and those of their children, the *divine principle of* UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE.

THE END.







